

*The Complete Poems*  
*of*  
**JOHN SKELTON**  
*Laureate*

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EDITED BY  
PHILIP HENDERSON

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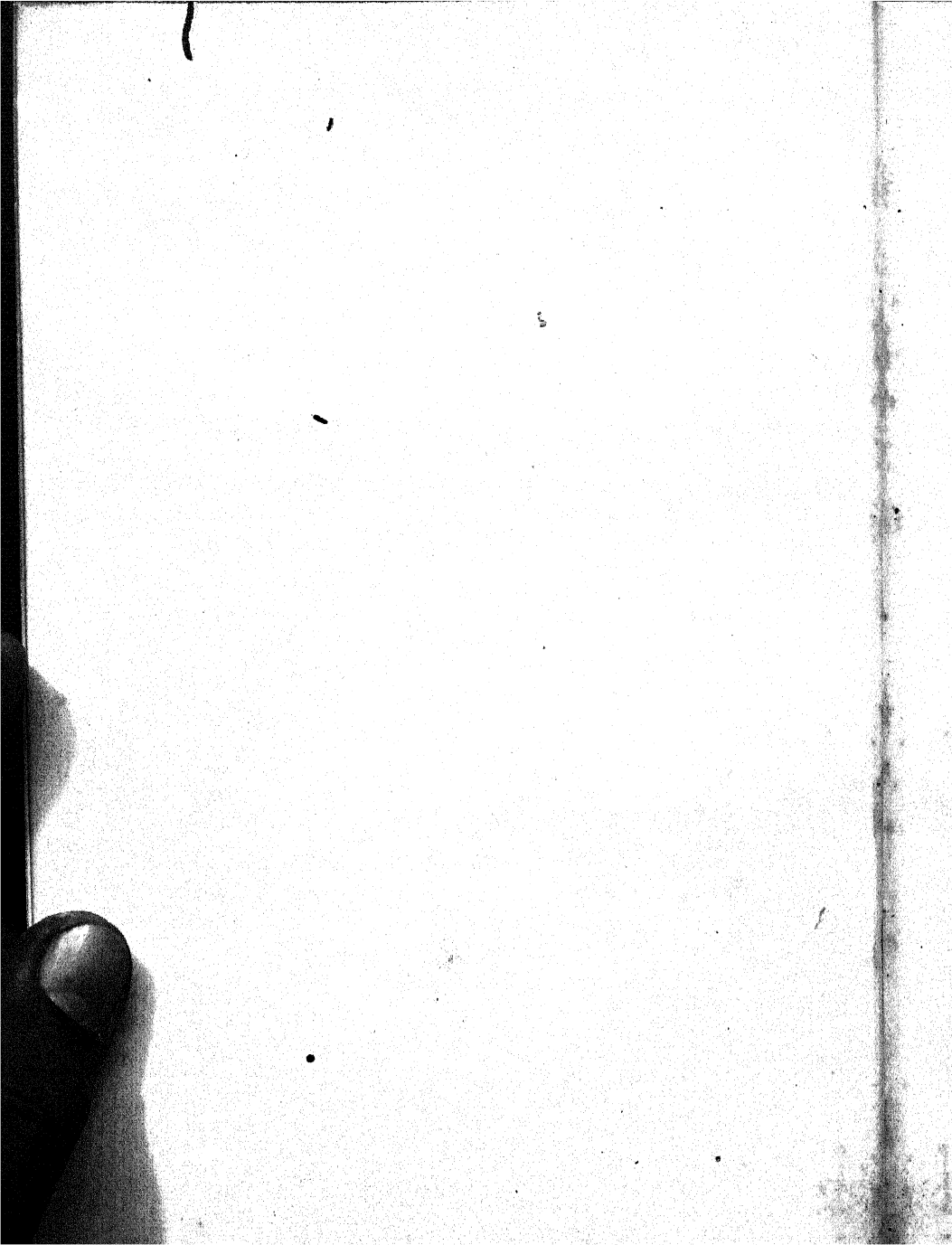
TO ERNEST RHYS

WHO HAS DONE SO MUCH

TO BRING LITERATURE WITHIN THE RANGE OF EVERYMAN,

THIS POPULAR EDITION OF JOHN SKELTON'S POEMS

IS DEDICATED IN AFFECTION AND ESTEEM



## INTRODUCTION

### I

OF Skelton's career we know comparatively little; of his personal appearance nothing is known. Although William Bullein represents him as sitting "in the corner of a pillar, with a frosty bitten face, frowning" and "writing many a sharp distichon,"<sup>1</sup> his reference cannot be taken as anything more than a hint at an imaginary portrait. The date of Skelton's birth has been fixed approximately at 1460. Tradition asserts that he was descended from the Skeltons of Cumberland, although Norfolk seems to have been his native county. Dyce thinks it probable that the poet was the "one Scheklton" who, according to Cole, became M.A. at Cambridge in 1484.<sup>2</sup> At any rate, we know that he was awarded the degree of laureate by the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, honoured by University of Louvain, and, some years after 1494, was chosen as tutor to the young Prince Henry, who subsequently became Henry VIII. Needless to say, his reputation as a scholar, as well as his personal character, must have been highly esteemed at that time to be thought to merit such an appointment — although Miss Agnes Strickland, in her *Lives of the Queens of England*, considers that "the corruption imparted by this ribald and ill-living wretch [i.e. Skelton] laid the foundation of his royal pupil's grossest crimes!" But, as Dyce remarks, "when ladies attempt to write history, they sometimes say odd things."<sup>3</sup> It was about this time, when Prince Henry was nine years old, that Erasmus visited England and paid his

<sup>1</sup>*A Dialogue both pleasant and pietifull*, 1564.

<sup>2</sup>*The Poetical Works of John Skelton*, edited by Rev. Alexander Dyce, 1843.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

famous tribute to Skelton as "the one light and glory of British letters" — a tribute provoked, not by Skelton's English poems, for Erasmus' knowledge of English was slight, but by his Latin verses and translations of the classics. Further evidence of his reputation as a classical scholar is afforded at this time by Caxton's preface to *The Boke of Eneydos compyled by Vyrgyle* (1490), which contains the invocation to

Maister John Skelton late created poet laureate in the University of Oxenford, to oversee and correct this said book, and to address and expound, whereas shall be found fault, to them that shall require it. For him I know sufficient to expound and English every difficulty that is therein. For he hath translated the *Epistles of Tully* and the *Book of Diodorous Sicullus*, and divers other works out of Latin into English, not in rude and old language, but in polished and ornate terms craftily, as he hath read Virgil, Ovid, Tully, and all the other noble poets and orators to me unknown: And also he hath read the Nine Muses and understands their musical sciences. . . . I suppose he hath drunken of Elicon's Well.

There is at least one example in the following pages of these "polished and ornate terms," in the prose passages of the *Replication*, which reminds us of nothing so much as the manner of Robert Greene's euphuistic novels, though with the mythological natural history left out. But it should be explained here that the title poet laureate did not originally signify the office of poet laureate as we know it to-day, but it was used to designate a degree in grammar, including rhetoric and versification, taken at the university, when the graduate was presented with a wreath of laurel. In 1493, however, Skelton was granted the distinction of wearing a white and green dress with the name Calliope embroidered upon it, and it may have been about this time, or even later, that he became honorary poet laureate, or king's orator, but no record has ever been discovered of his having enjoyed an

annual salary from the Crown in consequence of such an office. So that, although we still continue to give Skelton his full title, we do so chiefly in complaisance to the poet's memory, seeing that during his lifetime he so much insisted upon it.

During his pupil's minority, Skelton must have resided at Court, and as a Court official he would have been in personal contact with Thomas Wolsey, when the latter was chaplain to Henry VII, and also well-known to the poet Stephen Hawes, then Groom of the Chamber. It may possibly have been some slight put upon him by Wolsey at that time which planted the seed of that lifelong rancour that, in later years, brought forth such bitter fruit. Although Churchyard tells us that he was "seldom out of prince's grace,"<sup>1</sup> knowing his opinion of Courts and courtiers, as exemplified in *The Bouge of Court* and *Magnificence*, we cannot suppose that he was altogether popular there. Add to this Churchyard's report that "his speech was as he wrate," and we begin to understand something of his contemporaries' antagonism. In 1498, Skelton took holy orders, "but," says Dyce, "how soon after that he became rector of Diss in Norfolk, and what portion of his life he spent there in the exercise of his duties, cannot be ascertained."<sup>2</sup> We know that he was living there in 1504 and 1511, as he witnessed several wills there in those years; also, from the internal evidence of his poems, he seems to have been there in 1506, 1507, and 1513; and in the year of his death he was still nominally rector of Diss, although at that time he had been absent from his rectory for at least six years.

It has been supposed that this exile of a well-known scholar and courtier to an obscure Norfolk village was the result of rivals' machinations against him. This may be so, only we cannot ascertain how far this appointment *was* an

<sup>1</sup>Eulogy prefixed to Marsh's edition of Skelton's *Pithy, Pleasant, and Profitable Works*, 1568.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

exile; in any case, the exile may have been quite voluntary. Skelton may have used his rectory as a place of refuge while the periodic epidemics of the plague raged in the capital; or he may have gone there to write undisturbed; he may even have gone there as a refuge from the Court itself. We know, at any rate, that he lived there with his wife, keeping her ostensibly as a mistress, marriage in a priest being a capital crime. But whether it was necessary for a priest to retire into the country before he could keep a mistress in those days, we can, of course, only conjecture – although it may have been safer for them to marry in the country than in London. Skelton tells us in *Colin Clout* that the priests

Could not keep their wives  
From them for their lives!

and Wolsey, when his power became full-blown, was quite notorious in this respect. In fact, he “spareth neither maid nor wife,” Skelton tells us, suggesting sarcastically that no doubt he has a special bull from the Pope exempting him from chastity, as he had exempting him (on account of a weak digestion, which Skelton does not mention) from the more rigorous Lenten fasts. Nevertheless, Skelton was called to account and temporally suspended from his benefice for his own irregularities by his diocesan, the “impure and bloody-minded”<sup>1</sup> Bishop Nix, largely, it is said, at the instigation of the Dominican friars.

There is an amusing account of this episode in the apocryphal *Merrie Tales of Skelton*, some of which is worth quoting, as it must contain at least an element of truth and would seem to be fairly typical of the poet's fearlessness of mind and peculiar type of wit. The next Sunday, after taking his congregation to task pretty severely for “complaining of me to the bishop that I do keep a fair wench in my house,” he

<sup>1</sup>Dyce, *ibid.*

goes on to address his wife, whom he had apparently brought into church for this purpose:

"Thou wife," said Skelton, "that hast my child, be not afraid, bring me hither my child to me": the which was done. And he, showing his child naked to all the parish, said, "How say you neighbours all? – is not this child as fair as is the best of all yours? It hath nose, eyes, hands, and feet, as well as any of yours: it is not like a pig, nor a calf, nor like no fowl nor no monstrous beast. If I had," said Skelton, "brought forth this child without arms or legs, or that it were deformed, being a monstrous thing, I would never have blamed you to have complained to the bishop of me: but to complain without a cause, I say, as I said before in my anthem, *vos estis*, you be, and have been, and will and shall be knaves, to complain of me without a cause reasonable!"

One feels somehow that this story ought to be true, as it was such behaviour that won for Skelton the hearts of the people and made his name, like Rabelais', a legend for many a day to come. We have the evidence of Wood that, at Diss, Skelton was "esteemed more fit for the stage than the pew or pulpit"<sup>1</sup> – an estimate that surely must have come out of behaviour similar to that which formed the basis of the *Merrie Tales*.

But if he won the hearts of the people by what Warton calls his "ludicrous disposition,"<sup>2</sup> he lost the esteem of the more "respectable" men of his time. Bluff King Hal, we may suppose, would have been one of the first to appreciate such a jest, especially as we know the poems *Against Garnesche*, and even possibly *Elinor Rumming*, to have been composed for his amusement.

As Skelton grew older the antagonism of his rival men of letters – an antagonism that he seems to have done his best to arouse – by souring his temper, doubtless added venom to the tartness of his satire. Above all, his hatred of Wolsey

<sup>1</sup>*Ath. Oxon.*, ed. Bliss.

<sup>2</sup>*History of English Poetry* (1774–81).

increased to such an extent that he was the only man in England who dared to attack the great cardinal at the height of his power. The attack is at first veiled, as in *Magnificence*; in *Speak, Parrot*, Wolsey's rule is indicated as one of the most flagrant abuses of the age; in *Colin Clout* the tone is more general; but in *Why Come Ye Not to Court?* the full battery of his wrath is directed solely against the cardinal.

The anger aroused by such a piece as *Colin Clout* must have owed a great deal to the metre in which it was written. It was a metre that no "worthy clerk" would have used; and to set high Church matters, questions of the weightiest gravity, jiggling to this syncopated jazz-time was doubtless considered scandalous. Charges similar to those contained in *Colin Clout* were, of course, common enough: one might have found them, though much less pungently expressed, in Barclay's work, and Colet himself preached at Convocation against many such abuses. But then Barclay wrote either in courtly rhyme-royal stanzas or dignified couplets, and as for Colet, the clergy were obliged to swallow strong words from the dean of St. Paul's. Moreover, they knew that neither the nobles nor the people would read Barclay, but Skelton's ragged rhymes did not need to be read to take their effect — the ballad-singers set them ringing all over the country.

They were flung abroad at random like floating seeds upon a gusty day [a contemporary writes], and settled and struck where they listed. Many of them were never committed to print, but learned by heart by hundreds, repeated in the roadside alehouse or at the market-cross on fair-days, when dealer and customer left booth and stall vacant to push into the crowd hedging round the itinerant ballad-singer.<sup>1</sup>

Disseminated thus, we can form some idea of their probable effect upon a crowd already incensed against the Church

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in article by James Hooper in *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1897. The passage is apparently anonymous.



and prepared to believe anything to its discredit. We can see, too, how dangerous such rhymes were even for Wolsey, watched as he was with increasing dislike and suspicion throughout the country. The surprising thing is that he tolerated Skelton so long; and, knowing his elaborate system of espionage, we can only wonder at this literary David slinging his stones at the political giant, the man who was, after all, for a good many years the virtual ruler of England. Wolsey's contempt for criticism is well known; he may have considered Skelton beneath his notice. Or it may be that Skelton relied upon the king's protection — for no patron, however noble, could afford to oppose the cardinal openly. The example of the Duke of Buckingham was evidence of the fate awaiting those who became too bold. But Skelton was forced to take sanctuary at Westminster in 1523, after the composition and circulation of *Why Come Ye Not to Court?* Three years later we find the *Replication* dedicated to Wolsey in the most fulsome terms of flattery. But this may not prove anything, as these dedications were sometimes written and appended to books by their printers. At any rate, *The Garland of Laurel*, printed in 1523, has its respectful envoy to "The Great Cardinal, the most honourable legate *a latere*," and the vague and misleading mention of *Colin Clout* and "the popinjay" (i.e. *Speak, Parrot*) among his works suggests that he was still hoping to put Wolsey off the scent. If the English verses after the Latin envoy really belong to this poem, he confesses to living "Tween hope and dread," and in the Latin envoy itself he requests Wolsey "to be mindful to petition for the prebend which he promised to entrust to me some day." It is all very mysterious. It is almost as though he thought Wolsey unaware of his attacks.

The attacks themselves, of course, are in many ways unfair, for, although the actual charges are mostly justified, they only give one side of the truth. Skelton says nothing of Wolsey's great powers as a statesman — if, indeed, he was

capable of judging them; he grossly underrates his learning; and the frequent mentions of his "base origin" are snobbish, although they make an excellent foil to the cardinal's subsequent overbearing behaviour in the Star Chamber and elsewhere, with which Skelton does not fail to charge him. Undoubtedly there was a good deal of the *parvenu* in Wolsey—but, if a man can raise himself by his own abilities, the more credit to him! As for his humbling of the great nobles whose fathers and grandfathers had, for their personal feuds, for a century preceding turned England into a field of blood, the king, inwardly at any rate, must have been grateful. But, with all his services to his country, Wolsey was an unpopular Minister. It was at his door that Henry's taxes were laid; his foreign policy was watched throughout the land with suspicion, the story going about at one time that he was actually in the pay of France; and, generally, he was regarded as an impudent and overweening busybody, taking on more than he could accomplish, bungling everything, and wasting the country's money on futile schemes abroad and maintaining himself at home in wanton luxury. Fantastic as some of these notions seem to us to-day, that they were prevalent in his time we have Skelton's poems as evidence, and although Skelton's own personal grievances against his enemy helped to paint the picture blacker than it seemed to others, there can be little doubt that these poems reflect much of the attitude of the country at large.

We have still to consider Skelton's attitude to those problems of his day that he was more fitted to judge. He has been called one of the most sincere reformers of his time, and it has been claimed for him that he was superior to the prejudices of his age.<sup>1</sup>

Reformer he certainly was, but not, of course, in the sense of the word as it was understood at the Reformation. He was not, that is, a reformer like his great contemporary Hugh

<sup>1</sup>R. Hughes, *Poems of John Skelton*.

Latimer, or even like Bilney, whom he attacks in the *Replication* – both of whom were subsequently burnt for their zeal. Skelton's reforming zeal, fortunately for him, kept well on this side of heresy. It is to be noticed, too, that his work contains no actual suggestions for reform, and it would have been interesting to see what side he would have taken, had he lived, in the Reformation. He might, indeed, have been severely shocked at the attitude taken up by his old pupil. But, in his poems, Skelton contents himself with attacking existing abuses. It would seem that he was too full of wrath and bitterness to do much else, although his peculiar turn of mind sometimes gave even his anger a comical look. There is no suspicion, at any rate, that he considered the system itself at fault: he would reform abuses within the system without altering the system itself. In these matters he was quite orthodox – the *Replication* makes that clear enough – while his savage exultance over the Scottish defeat at Flodden is sufficient to show that, for all his culture, he still had a good deal of the unredeemed barbarian in him. In fact, the truth is that, like other figures of the Middle Ages, he was a combination of savage cruelty, in questions of religious and national prejudice, and of exquisite tenderness, when his personal emotions were touched. As poet and priest he was both original and conservative, and, like the age he lived in, a conflicting mixture of antiquated medievalism and the new spirit of humanism – yet, in spite of himself, by his writings he helped to precipitate the greatest reform that the Church in England had yet known. In scholastic matters, again, he was apparently conservative, and, notwithstanding that he himself, by his translation of Latin classics and his new English grammar, had contributed to the advancement of learning and the regeneration of the language, he regarded the increasing study of Greek at the universities with dislike and suspicion. His views on this subject are unmistakably set forth in *Speak, Parrot*. Everywhere he finds confusion: in

the Church, in the State, and in the schools. But, actually although he did not recognise it, this was an age of transition: the old order was rapidly changing, ideas and systems were in a state of flux, and Skelton himself, with his unrest, his satire, his critical sense, was a typical figure of the age. And it is this quality, perhaps, that make him in some ways peculiarly sympathetic to us who are to-day also on the verge of a new era.

It has been thought strange that none of the names of the Humanists appear in Skelton's surviving work: there is no mention of either More, or Colet, or Linacre, or Grocyn. All we know is that he quarrelled with Lily, the grammarian, whose attitude to him may have set the example for the rest of the Oxford group. Lily's reply to the usual vituperative verses written about him by Skelton, as translated by Fuller in his *Worthies*, in substance was:

With face so bold and teeth so sharp  
Of viper's venom, why dost thou carp? . . .  
Skelton, thou art, let all men know it,  
Neither learned nor a poet.

And, according to the new standards of learning and poetry, this was partially true. The great bond that united all these men was their love of Greek, and it was precisely the study of Greek to which Skelton most objected, as being detrimental to the old scholastic curriculum. (Incidentally, it has been pointed out that the "Skeltonic" itself may be considered as an adaptation in English of a verse-form quite commonly used by the medieval Latinists.<sup>1</sup>) But, while Skelton showed himself capable of writing Latin verse in imitation of classical models, verse which even Warton called "elegant" (see, for example, the elegiacs on Henry VII in the Appendix), his bias was undoubtedly towards the old accentual

<sup>1</sup>J. M. Berdan, *Early Tudor Poetry*.

Latin of the Middle Ages – a mode of writing that a man like Lily considered barbarous. This kind of thing, indeed, would scarcely have recommended itself to the Humanists:

*Dic, inimice crucis Christi,  
Ubi didicisti  
Facere hoc,  
Domine Dawcock?*

– (*Ware the Hawk.*)

But then, English humanism had little influence upon Skelton, except that he reacted against it – in any case it did little more than pave the way for future developments in poetry – and he was born too late and was too conservative in temper to be much affected by it. Nevertheless, his work, although full of such “monkish” Latin tags as that quoted above, shows a wide acquaintance with classical authors, and he frequently compares himself as a satirist to Juvenal and Martial. In *The Garland of Laurel* he goes even further and tells the reader to regard him as the “British Catullus” –

Say: Skelton was your Adonis;  
Say: Skelton was your Homer!

Doubtless, anticipating the effect of such claims on his Oxford rivals, he added that he is “not sorry to bear with dogs’ madness, for even great Virgil bore the brunt of similar threats, and even Ovid’s Muse was not exempt.” But such writing was not calculated to make him popular among other men of learning. And, although to-day we can afford to smile at his claims, since they appear too fantastic to be taken seriously – if, indeed, they were ever seriously intended – it must be remembered that in his own day, except for Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate (who are represented in *The Garland of Laurel* as honouring him, although he modestly assures them that “ye have me far passing my merits extolléd”), he had no other

outstanding English models with which to compare himself. If all the poetry of the last four hundred years was unknown to us, Skelton would appear as a far more imposing figure than he does at present. Obvious as such a statement may be, that was the situation in literature when he wrote.

Skelton's chief antagonist, as far as we know, was Alexander Barclay. Unfortunately his *Contra Skeltonum* has disappeared, as it might have thrown some light on our poet's life. We have, at any rate, the *Fourth Eclogue*, which contains a significant passage:

And to what vices that princes most intend,  
Those dare these fools solemnise and commend.  
Then is he decked as Poet Laureate,  
When stinking Thais made him her graduate.

— which would seem to support the theory that, in Skelton's case, the laureateship was a royal rather than an academic honour. And at the end of *The Ship of Fools* there is the contemptuous reference to *Philip Sparrow* — which, incidentally, proves this poem to have been written before 1508 —

It longeth not to my art and cunning  
For Philip Sparrow the *Dirige* to sing.

But apparently there were others also who took exception to this elegy on the dead sparrow — others that, as Skelton tells us in *The Garland of Laurel*, “grudge thereat with frowning countenance.” To whom he lightly makes reply:

But what of that? hard it is to please all men:  
Who list to amend, let him set to his pen!

But there is still another, as well as these mysterious critics, mentioned in the same poem, that “frowned on me full angrily and pale” — Robert Gaguin, the French historian.

And, although we now have the long-lost *Recule Against Gaguin* – if, indeed, we have it all – we are not very much the wiser. But no doubt these cryptic reproaches refer to some discourtesy of Gaguin's well known at the time, or to some personal grievance between the two men. There are the Garnesche poems as eloquent evidence of what Skelton could do in the way of personal abuse, once he was thoroughly roused, although in this case the "flyting" would seem to be fundamentally good-humoured, having none of the concentrated venom of the Wolsey satires. It is not unlikely, though, that the quarrel originated in offended vanity on both sides, and that the king fanned the flames of their tempers into a battle of wit for his own amusement. At any rate, the metaphors Skelton hurls at his adversary must even then have seemed too preposterous to be taken seriously, although the reflections on the knight's amorous prowess may have struck home.

Yet there are times when one begins to suspect that Skelton's satire was not always quite what it seemed, for, even in the most serious passages, he will suddenly drop off the mask of moralist and begin clowning. And, even when he was most blowing his own trumpet, it may be that he was half laughing at himself and others the while. So that we cannot, any more than his contemporaries, always be too sure of his naivety. In one case at least – that is, in *Colin Clout* – we can see how much it suited him to play the simple-minded innocent.

At all events, the hostility of rivals was compensated for by illustrious patronage. Early in life, Skelton was commissioned by Henry Percy, fifth Earl of Northumberland – a lover of literature at a time when most other nobles could neither read nor write – to dedicate an elegy to the memory of the fourth earl, who was murdered in a popular rising in Yorkshire on April 28th, 1489. "At the contemplation of my Lady's Grace" – i.e. at the command of the Countess of

Richmond and Derby, Henry VII's mother, on whose death he also wrote a Latin elegy – Skelton translated de Guilleville's *Peregrinage de la Vie Humaine*. The Countess of Surrey, too, must have been an admirer of his genius, for it is at her instigation that a garland of laurel is woven for him in the poem recording the event, while he was staying, possibly as a member of her train, at Sheriff-Hutton Castle in Yorkshire. It has been thought that, at one time, Skelton was tutor to young Henry Howard, although that poet's work as it has come down to us shows little enough of his influence.

The last six years of Skelton's life were passed in sanctuary at Westminster, and he died there on June 21st, 1529. It is said that on his death-bed he confessed to having secretly married the woman by whom he left several children. But the only relic left us of those dim days is an entry in the churchwardens' accounts of St. Margaret's which reads:

1529. Item. Of Mr. Skelton for viii. tapers *ol.* 2*s.* 8*d.*

He was buried without ceremony in the chancel of a neighbouring church, and this inscription placed over his grave:

*Joannes Skeltonus, vates Pierius, hic situs est.*

## II

It was John Skelton's misfortune to live through what is generally admitted to be the dullest age of our literature. Born into the last half of the fifteenth century, he inherited an already sterile medieval tradition, and at the time of his death the dry bones of English poetry had still to be revived by the new breath of the Renaissance.

Yet there are occasional lyrics and ballads of this time, such as the great *Carol*, *The Nut Brown Maid*, and *Quia*



*Amore Languet*, that survive as some of the most incontestably perfect things in the English language. And all through the fifteenth century, the spirit of poetry lived on in quiet monastery cells, isolated, while the rest of the land was given over to the din and vaunting chivalry of civil war. But, whenever it came in contact with the Court, poetry was immediately debased. Thus it is to his brief Court-life that Lydgate owed much of his empty sententiousness, and in his interminable verses we see the vanity of the world intermixed and diluted with a natural propensity to dry moralising – both of these qualities being absent from the lovely anonymous poems in which the mild sweetness of certain truly religious minds of that unhappy time lives on. But Skelton had his share of both the worst qualities of the Court poets and the best of the anonymous writers. Indeed, had it not been for his fiery originality, that in defiance of tradition adopted a mean form and forged it into a living and personal language, his scholastic training and literary inheritance would have been sufficient to bury the poet in him beyond all hope of resurrection. But, as it is, he stands out as a unique figure in the history of English poetry, a sudden and strange illumination between the dreary Lydgatian wastes, when the manner of Chaucer was unimaginatively imitated without the least spark of his vital genius, and the fresh spring of Wyatt and Surrey.

To the chief writers of Skelton's day, however, Lydgate was still the supreme model, and, emulating his "polished eloquence," men like Hawes and Barclay prepared for themselves a respectable oblivion. It is, one might almost say, largely Skelton's energetic "bad taste" that has kept his name alive where others have been forgotten. But the price he has paid for this survival is the notoriousness of a few poems which, while they perpetuated his name, also served to befoul his reputation. Indeed, the drab decency of his contemporary rivals could scarcely have wished for a better revenge!

Since his own age, the body of Skelton's work has been ignored, and he has been read hastily and in scraps for the sake of a few scabrous passages for which, after enjoying their little snigger, his readers have condemned him. That such was the attitude of, at any rate, the scholastic readers in the eighteenth century we learn from Pope's couplet:

Chaucer's worst ribaldry is learned by rote,  
And beastly Skelton Heads of Houses quote.

But as in the Age of Good Sense Chaucer was little more admired than Skelton, Warton's failure to understand him was perhaps a foregone conclusion. For, when Warton wrote his *History of English Poetry*, literary ideals had not after all, changed very greatly since Pope wrote *The Dunciad* fifty years earlier: and, although he did good work in recalling attention to the earlier poets, Warton showed his lack of imagination by preferring the conventional imitators of Lydgate to Skelton. But that was only to be expected in an age when everything that did not conform to "classical" smoothness and regularity was considered barbaric. The fresh morning voice that hails us from his work, as of a busy workman delighting in his craft, the mild purity of his lyrics, the delicate fancy, the irony by turns whimsical and bitter, the deep religious feeling of the poems in which he carried on the tradition of the morality and miracle plays, and, above all, his outstanding vigour and originality — all this was lost to Thomas Warton and critics like him, so that all they have to give us is a few stuffy sentiments of scholarly prudishness. "It is in vain," writes Warton — "it is in vain to apologise for the coarseness, obscenity, and scurrility of Skelton by saying that his poetry is tinctured with the manners of his age. Skelton would have been a writer without decorum in any period." Yes, it is quite in vain, and for us, not only in vain, but hypocritical. And let it be admitted, also, that it is to such

"writers without decorum" that we owe some of our greatest debts of gratitude: for it is they who, by transgressing the narrow laws both of 'decency' and form, bring new vitality into literature and liberate the spirit of poetry from the library and the lecture-room. But taste has changed vastly since Warton wrote; it has changed vastly since Victorian and Edwardian critics wrote; it has changed so greatly, in fact, that our own age may bring down upon itself the virtuous censure of future Wartons. But, however that may be, what is of interest here is that to-day we are able to enjoy Skelton, just as we are able to enjoy Rabelais, without troubling about the principles of decorum that perverted our ancestors' judgement. We can see, for example, how sadly lacking in a sense of humour these critics must have been if they could not appreciate the topsy-turvy brilliance of a poem like *Elinor Rimming*.

But with the Romantic Revival at the beginning of the next century the tide began to turn. Coleridge gave his opinion that "old Skelton's *Philip Sparrow*" was "an exquisite and original poem." Wordsworth seconded him with the more reserved statement that Skelton was "a writer deserving of far greater attention than his works had hitherto received." Southey, more enthusiastically, wrote in the *Quarterly Review* for September 1814 that Skelton was "one of the most extraordinary writers of any age or country." In 1843 appeared Dyce's scholarly edition of the poetical works – an edition upon which all future editions of the poet would inevitably have to be based. But there were no future editions – no complete editions, that is, although small selections appeared in 1902 and recently in 1924 – and Dyce himself offered his volumes with evident trepidation to "the very limited class of readers for which they are intended." Since Dyce, critics have at least paid Skelton lip service, although they have not encouraged anyone to read him. One reason for this neglect is that Dyce's edition has been so long out of

print that it is only known to scholars. Also, on account of the old spelling of his poems, which until now has never been removed, and the unduly stressed obscurity of these, Skelton is generally regarded as an old and difficult poet. It is true that there still remain obscure passages in his work, although the greater part of it, to an intelligent reader, is as clear as daylight. But it is well to remember that the obscurity of certain parts of *Speak, Parrot*, for instance, was intentional, as at the time Skelton feared to make his meaning too plain; although to informed contemporaries, no doubt, it was much easier than it is for us, when many references are lost. But even this poem, hitherto regarded as practically unintelligible, seems now to have yielded up a great part of its secret to the ingenious investigations of Professor Berdan of Yale University. By finding a probable clue to the dating of the piece (see page 289 *note*), Professor Berdan has made it possible to interpret the cryptic utterances of the bird in the light of the history of the years they are now seen in all probability to cover. All the same, his interpretation cannot be accepted as in any way final, although with the meagre evidence in our possession it is certainly very feasible, and brings partial meaning into a piece that is usually considered fantastic jibberish.

If the eighteenth century was hampered, by its classic notions of decorum, from appreciating Skelton, and the nineteenth embarrassed by moral considerations, and the age that grew into being with the advance of the sixteenth century, its head slightly turned by the new discoveries, literary and geographical, found itself despising anything that savoured of the medieval, our own age, with its poetic experiment, has witnessed a revival of interest in this man who is now seen to be one of the most versatile metrists in the language. Certainly no more effective polemical measure — unless we except the heroic couplet — has been used than the lash of *Colin Clout*. Nor, in its own way, has the richly

humorous syncopation of *Elinor Rumming* ever been surpassed. And *Philip Sparrow* is evidence of what delicate music could, upon occasion, be evoked from the same measure apparently so rough and intractable. In these poems, Skelton stands out as completely original. Here there is no one like him in all our literature. If *Elinor Rumming*, in its harsh angularity, is like a cubist painting, as Mr. Richard Hughes suggests, *Philip Sparrow* is like a piece of music for the harpsichord, with its bird-like whimsicality and light elegaic modulations. The delightfully ironical quotation of the Mass for the Dead is itself a stroke of genius. As for Skelton's mastery of the conventional forms of the day, no one since Chaucer has used the rhyme-royal with such variety and animation as he in the *Bouge of Court*. It is a far cry from this poem, with its vivid and humorous characterisation, to the lifeless and everlasting allegories of his contemporaries and immediate forebears. But in *Speak, Parrot* he makes the form his own: the poet himself speaks with the bird, and we feel the pathos of a sensitive and keenly intelligent thing forced to assume the rôle of clown and charlatan — but yet, being a professed fool, granted liberty to speak his mind. "For truth in parable ye wantonly pronounce." But, he tells us, an it be well sought, under that doth rest matter more precious than jewels. Some of the precious matter certainly needs finding, although anyone can enjoy the fresh and ingenious skill of the opening stanzas. Here is the parrot looking at us with his "beak bent and little wanton eye," reeling to and fro on his perch and punctuating his biting remarks with ironical jibberish and bursts of idiot laughter. In this poem there is a peculiar atmosphere that one only finds in Skelton. The poem is, he tells us, a mirror that seems transparent, or like a looking-glass in a riddle. Not a very illuminating remark, perhaps, but conveying just that combination of queer clarity, deeper meaning behind appearances, and reflected inference that we feel dimly as we

read. It is all quaint and witty and very characteristic. *The Garland of Laurel*, otherwise a rather stilted and uninspired poem, except that it is of interest to us as Skelton's self-staged apotheosis, contains some really exquisite love-sonnets in the comparatively well-known lines to Margery Wentworth and Margaret Hussey. The conventional minor pieces to various ladies, such as the poem beginning "The ancient acquaintance, madam, between us twain," and the Northumberland elegy, with their stilted imagery and empty sententiousness, have all the worst faults of the complimentary verses of that date. Unfortunately, the other elegy, and by far the best of the two, that *On the Death of Edward IV*, is now thought by some critics (see Brie and Koebeling) not to be his at all. But, in default of any positive evidence to the contrary, it has been included in this edition. Other minor poems that deserve individual mention are: *Upon a Dead Man's Head* — where the movement of the verse has a certain dry finality perfectly suited to the theme — the deeply felt *Woefully Arrayed*, the three *Prayers to the Trinity* — the use of rhyming polysyllables here giving the effect of grandeur — the poems *Against Garnesche* — with their knock-about vituperative humour — the vigorous and indignant *Ware the Hawk*, and, of course, the madrigal *Mannerly Margery* and the perfectly delightful *Lullay, Lullay, Like a Child*, which are both sufficient to show Skelton's power as a writer of really good popular songs that belong to more cheerful and full-blooded days than our own.

As for *Magnificence*, his one surviving play, it is not, perhaps, generally recognised that Skelton was the first professional man of letters to adopt the drama as a literary form. There had, of course, been numerous morality and miracle plays before his time, but these were anonymous and confined to ecclesiastical subjects, their purpose being either merely to illustrate Bible-stories or to show that the wages of sin is death. Skelton, however, introduces a secular

subject with his "interlude," and, although his purpose is distinctly moral, his means are satirical and, as Dr. Ramsay points out in his edition of the play,<sup>1</sup> he is chiefly concerned with showing that the wages of imprudent spending, through certain unnamed evil advisers, will be, for a certain unnamed rich prince, adversity and poverty. The case at issue is not so much universal as particular – although, of course, it can be interpreted universally – and the play contains much indirect satire of Wolsey's influence on the young Henry VIII. Moreover, compared with the earlier moralities, Skelton's interlude is quite elaborate in the design of its metrical details. The principal verse employed, however, is the rugged and heavy native long line of four stresses with a caesura after the second stress, dividing the line, like Anglo-Saxon verse, into two rhythmic halves of practically equivalent weight. But the metre is, like the *leit-motif* in music, to a large extent varied, for each character and each scene has its appropriate verse-measure. Thus the courtly rhyme-royal stanza is employed for the graver and more dignified passages and the lighter, swifter couplet for scenes in which the influence of Fancy and Folly predominate. Again, in the scenes of rapid dialogue between the "Vices," the irregular couplet is used, the metre being intentionally loose and lightly marked to suggest that, while these characters are plotting a common villany, their individual characters are indistinguishable, one vice covering them all. In this way the metrical variations are quite subtly characteristic, and as the Vices are left alone "in the place" their monologues vary in metre, from Courtly Abusion's account of his more aristocratic sins, appropriately cast in the half-line rhyme-royal, and frantic Fancy's syncopated measures – strangely preluding our modern jazz – to Crafty Conveyance's heavily accented rhyme-royal stanzas, as being characteristic of one of the "heavy" villains of the piece. We find, too, that, as the

<sup>1</sup>Early English Text Society, 1908.

drama approaches its climax with Magnificence's overthrow the metre of the scenes as a whole becomes more rapid and ragged, until it culminates at the final entrance of Folly, who sets the hero's brain spinning on the very brink of disaster. Then, with the entrance of grim Adversity, there is a sudden change to the heavily accented four-beat line. These final scenes are by far the most moving in the play. It is as though Skelton himself was as well acquainted with his own more dreadful characters as with the lighter courtiers upon whom he pours out the full venom of his scorn.

If *Magnificence* reflects much of the philosophy of Sebastian Brant's *Narrenschiff*, as Dr. Ramsay seeks to prove, *The Bouge of Court* is still more influenced by that work as Skelton was familiar with it in Barclay's version, *The Ship of Fools*, published in 1509. Yet, in form at any rate, *The Bouge of Court* – the most logically constructed of his poems – is a typical fifteenth-century allegory. It has the same astrological introduction, the insistence upon the necessity of "covert terms," and the usual assumption of modesty: the poet then falls asleep and his dream becomes the substance of the poem: he wakes up at a critical moment in the action and writes his "little book," for which he makes a conventional apology. Such is the form of Hawes' *Example of Virtue* and *Pastime of Pleasure*.

The difference is that Skelton fills the conventional framework with life and humour, though his allegorical figures are a satire on Court life in general. But then directness, vitality, and honesty of sentiment are Skelton's most obvious qualities, and it is these that have kept much of his work as fresh and alive to-day as when it was first written.

No metre could be more lively and forcible than the so-called "Skeltonic." Here are no literary graces, to be sure, but the stuff of life, the bare facts driven home with the curt-ness born of stringent necessity. But, once started, his bubbling volubility went to his head, and he found it very



difficult to stop. Over and over again he repeats the same things, devoid of all logical form and construction — although these pieces may be said to have a certain concentric movement of their own — round and round the same point he goes, always coming back to where he started from. But doubtless this apparently endless flow of words, this invincible facility in rhyme was one reason for his popularity with the unlettered public of his day, for it is thus, bursting out into spontaneous rhyme, that we find him, along with Will Summers, in the chapbook *Long Meg of Westminster*. Nevertheless his was no relaxed verbosity. Although he sometimes follows the vagaries of his rhymes, his grip of his subject never slackens: he beat sparks from his verse that lit upon the tonsures of the clergy and stung them. He managed his measure with a skill that no one else has ever been able to pick up again, for in other hands it degenerates into hopeless monotony.<sup>1</sup> And, although with him it goes at breathless speed, he is always ready with some ingenious rhythmic variation. It can scuttle and tumble headlong with the alewives of Leatherhead, “a sort of foul drabs” who,

With titters and tatters,  
Bring dishes and platters,  
With all their might running  
To Elinor Rumming  
To have of her tunning.

It can be plaintively elegaic:

When I remember again  
How my Philip was slain,  
Never half the pain  
Was between you twain,  
Pyramus and Thisbe,  
As then befell to me:

<sup>1</sup>One might mention here, however, Robert Graves' earlier poems (*Poems*, 1914-1926), where Skelton's manner has been very successfully caught in snatches.

## INTRODUCTION

I wept and I wailed,  
My tears down hailed,  
But nothing it availed  
To call Philip again,  
Whom Gib, our cat, hath slain.

It can imitate the bird's movements:

When I remember it,  
How prettily it would sit  
Many times and oft  
Upon my finger aloft . . .  
For it would come and go,  
And fly so to and fro;  
And on me it would leap  
When I was asleep  
And his feathers shake.

It can be curt and epigrammatic:

Lo, for to do shamefully  
He judgeth it no folly!  
But to write of his shame  
He saith we are to blame.  
What a frenzy is this –  
No shame to do amiss,  
And yet he is ashamed  
To be shamefully named!

The astonishing facility of the rhyming in each case adds force and point to the passage. Such verse has a lean, athletic quality, relying for its effect, not upon imagery or the softer poetic graces, but upon a diction clear and direct, and the hitting power of its recurring rhymes and terse, staccato rhythm.

No satisfactory estimate of Skelton as a poet has yet been made. To-day, in some quarters, there is a tendency to make up for his neglect by going to the other extreme with extravagant praise. There is excuse for both attitudes, as

Skelton is a particularly difficult writer to estimate. For one thing, he has been more read about than actually read, and he has fallen into the hands of scholars and critics who know before they read him that he does not write poetry as it should be written, and whose chief criterion is to admire what has been already admired before, or into the hands of eccentrics who admire a thing simply because it has never been admired before. Also his reputation has scarcely recovered from the blight cast upon it by Pope and Warton. Otherwise, critics have been puzzled by a man who is a mixture of piety and ribaldry, of sensibility and savagery; they have been put out by the swift whimsicality of his mind, embarrassed in the presence of one who is, by turns, fiercely in earnest and laughing at his own earnestness. Neither can they see with him the comical side of ugliness and filth — their own minds not being sufficiently above such things to take them lightly. Thus for many he has remained “beastly Skelton.” And, all the while vexing their minds how to “place” him, they overlook those snatches of purest poetry with which he can at times enchant our minds —

Ennewéd your colour  
Is like the daisy flower  
After the April shower;  
Star of the morrow gray.

Although no one would pretend that Skelton was a great poet, one hesitates to apply to him the epithet “minor.” One feels all the while that he worked at a disadvantage. He is frequently complaining of the rusty state of the language. He complains that

Our natural tongue is rude,  
And hard to be ennewed  
With polished terms lusty:  
Our language is so rusty,  
So cankered, and so full

## INTRODUCTION

Of frowards, and so dull,  
That if I would apply  
To write ornately,  
I wot not where to find  
Terms to serve my mind.

Indeed, his difficulty could not be more plainly and simply expressed. However, he was wise enough not to attempt to "write ornately," and confined himself to a plain vigorous style, often employing the most rudimentary metre he could think of, only too aware of the pitfalls of sententious prosiness or unconvincing grandiloquence that awaited the imitator of Lydgate. But, had Skelton lived in almost any other age than his own, it is fairly certain that, with a perfected instrument at his command, a regenerated language with a great tradition behind it, he would now occupy a high and respected place in poetry, and his wit, applied to more modern problems, would most likely have won him the position of a Swift, or perhaps even of a Shaw. As it is, he must be given the credit for introducing into poetry what, in his hands, amounted to a new idiom, although it is only he who has ever been able to make it seem a natural and inevitable expression of thought and emotion, or to use it with just that delight in words and rhythmic adroitness that transmutes even what might at first sight appear a doggerel measure into poetry. And he is, without exaggeration, the most considerable figure in poetry between Chaucer and Spenser, a lonely star shooting his fiery and erratic spears into the twilight-dawn before the risen sun of the Elizabethans. His poetry has the fascination of all fresh and spontaneous things. And, although he may weary us at times with the naïve delight in his own ecstatic volubility, it is not long before he surprises our attention with some quaint and witty phrase, some bright epigram, and we read on, willingly caught in the clear unending chain of words.

*June* 1931

PHILIP HENDERSON

## GENERAL NOTE ON THE TEXT

THE present text has been founded on Dyce's edition of 1843, although in some places I have preferred manuscript readings – as given in Dyce's footnotes – and have made certain slight emendations of my own as the sense seemed to require. But the main difficulty facing any editor of Skelton is the absence of the original manuscripts and the corrupt state of the early editions on which, apart from Dyce, we are forced to depend. And even Dyce, although he cleared away endless misprints and copyists' errors, returning to the task through half a lifetime, left many obscure passages in his edition which have, at any rate, now been restored to intelligibility. In preparing my text I have also made use of Robert Lee Ramsay's edition of *Magnificence* (published by the Oxford University Press, for the Early English Text Society, in 1908), adopting his method of dividing the play into stages and scenes and his punctuation of the opening lines. I have, therefore, to thank the Oxford University Press for giving me their permission to do this. I have also collated certain passages of my text with Mr. Richard Hughes' edition of Skelton's *Poems* (Heinemann, 1924), and acknowledgements will be found in their proper place. Otherwise the punctuation and modernisation of the text is my own.

As to the system of modernisation adopted, my aim has been to produce a fluency and lucidity rather than a pedantically correct indication of every transposed stress and accented final *e* that may or may not have been pronounced in Skelton's time. We know that in this respect Skelton worked under difficulties. Even as he wrote, the final accented *e* of Chaucer was rapidly falling into disuse, while pronunciation

itself was undergoing a radical change. In cases, however, where the final *e* seems to have been lightly pronounced for the requirements of the metre it will be found dotted. But there is no doubt that Skelton used his metres freely, and, as with his contemporary, Hawes, we sometimes have what should properly be a regular five-stress line reading more easily as a four-stress – unless, of course, we pad it out with dotted *e*'s. But, in any case, Skelton's lines should not be read as iambics, even when they approximate to such smoothness, which is not often, for by attempting to read them in that way we shall turn what, in its own time, was fairly regular and artistic verse into wretched, halting stuff. The Skeltonic itself – in such poems as *Philip Sparrow* and *Colin Clout* – varies between a two- and a three-stress line, being in reality the old native long line of four stresses broken in half and rhymed.

The poems are arranged here more or less in chronological order, except that *The Garland of Laurel*, being a fitting *coda* to Skelton's poetic achievement, has been placed at the end of the book, and the shorter pieces have been grouped together under three convenient headings, there being even less evidence of the date of their composition than in the case of the longer pieces. This being intended more as a popular edition of Skelton than a dish to set before scholars, variorum readings have been omitted, as also Skelton's Latin marginal notes to *Speak*, *Parrot*, *A Replication*, and *The Garland*. The Latin poems themselves will be found in the Appendix, while the Latin portions of the English text have been rendered in footnotes as well as their often mutilated condition would allow. For valuable help in worrying out the more difficult passages I have to thank my uncle, Mr. C. G. Henderson. The odd chapters from Henry Watson's translation of Droy'n's French version of Locker's Latin version of Brandt's *Narrenschiff*, hitherto included among Skelton's works by mistake (largely due to a reference in *The Garland* to a lost

piece called *The Nation of Fools*, but which, as Brie suggests, might refer to the lines *Upon a Comely Coistrown*), have now been removed. But two small pieces discovered by Brie among the manuscripts at Cambridge, and first printed by him in his *Skelton-Studien*, have been added.

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(No dates on editions unless stated. The bracketed figures are only conjectural.)

Here begynneth a lytell treatyse named the bowge of courte.

Enprynted at Westminster by me Wynkyn the Worde.

Also another edition by the same printer.

Here folowyth divers Balettys and dyties solacyous devisyd by Master Skelton, Laureat. (Without printer's name, but evidently from the press of Pynson.)

Skelton Laureate agaynste a comely Coystrowne that curyowsly chawntyd And curryshly cowntred, And madly in hys Musykks mokkyshly made, Against the ix. Musys of polytyke Poems and Poettys matryculat. (Pynson.) Contains also: *Upon a Dead Man's Head* and *Womanhood, Wanton, Ye Want*.

A replycacion agaynst certayne yong scolers, abiured of late, etc. . . . Imprinyed by Richard Pynson, printer to the kynges most noble grace.

A ryght delectable tratyse upon a goodly Garland or Chapelet of Lawrell, etc. . . . Inprynted by me Rycharde faukes dwelling in dura rent or els in Powlis chyrche yarde at the sygne of the A.B.C. The yere of our lorde, god M.CCCCC.XXLII.

Magnyfycence. A goodly interlude and a mery devysed and made by mayster Skelton, poete laureate late deceasyd. (Rastell.)

Also a reprint of Rastell's edition, 1821, and E.E.T.S. edition, by Robert L. Ramsay, 1908.

Here after foloweth the boke of Phyllyp Sparowe compyled by mayster Skelton, Poete Laureate. Prynted at London at the poultry by Rychard Kele. (1550?)

Also editions by Antony Kitson, Abraham Veale, John Walley, and John Wyght.

Here after foloweth certaine bokes cōpyled by mayster Skeltō, whose names here after shall appere;

Speake, Parot.



The death of the noble Prynce, Kynge Edwarde the fourth.

A treatyse of the Scottes.

Ware the Hawke.

The Tunnyng of Elynoure Rummyng.

Imprynted at London, in Crede Lane, by John King and Thomas Marche. (1565?)

Also an edition by Richard Lant, for Henry Tab.

Here after followeth a lytell boke called Colyn Cloute compyled . . .

etc. Imprinted at London by me Richarde Kele dwelling in the powltry at the long shop under saynt Myldredes chyrche. (1550?)

Other editions by Wyghte, Veale, Kytson, and Thomas Godfray.

Here after foloweth a lytell boke, which hath to name, Why come ye nat to courte, compiled . . . etc. . . . Richard Kele. (1550?)

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Pithy pleasaunt and profitable workes of maister Skelton, Poete Laureate. Now collected and newly published. Anno 1568.

Imprinted at London in Fletestreate, neare unto saint Dunstones church by Thomas Marshe.

Elynour Rummin: the famous ale-wife of England. Harlian

Miscell., vol. i., 1746. Now singe we, as we were wont, etc., a black letter vol. of *Christmas Carols—Bibliograph. Miscell.*,

Bliss, 1813.

The Manner of the World now a dayes—Imprinted Copland

Also in *Old Ballads*, Collier, 1840.

Pithy Pleasaunt and profitable works of Maister Skelton, 1736.

(A very inaccurate reprint of Marsh.) Edited by J. Bowle.

Also a reprint of this in Chalmer's *English Poets*, 1810.

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- Poems against Garnesche. MS. Harl. 367, fol. 101.
- Wofully araid. Fairfax MS., Add. MSS. 5465, fols. 76 and 86, B.M.
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ON THE DEATH OF THE NOBLE PRINCE,  
KING EDWARD THE FOURTH

*Miseremini me,*<sup>1</sup> ye that be my friends!

This world hath conforméd me down to fall.  
How may I endure, when that every thing ends?  
What creature is born to be eternall?

Now there's no more but "Pray for me all!"  
Thus say I, Edward, that late was your king,  
And twenty two years ruled this imperiall,  
Some unto pleasure, and some to no liking.  
Mercy I askè of my misdoing:

What availleth it, friends, to be my foe,  
Sith I cannot resist, nor amend your complaining?  
*Quia, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*<sup>2</sup>

I sleep now in mould, as it is naturall  
That earth unto earth hath his reverture.  
What ordained God to be terrestriall  
Without recourse to the earth of nature?  
Who to live ever may himself assure?

What is it to trust on mutability,  
Sith that in this world nothing may endure?  
For now am I gone, that late was in prosperity:  
To presume thereupon it is but a vanity,  
Not certain, but as a cherry-fair,<sup>3</sup> full of woe:  
Reigned not I of late in great felicity?  
*Et, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*

Where was in my life such one as I .  
While Lady Fortune with me had continuance?  
Granted not she me to have victory,  
In England to reign, and to contribute France<sup>4</sup>?

<sup>1</sup>Pity me.

<sup>2</sup>a cherry-wake.

<sup>3</sup>Since, lo, in dust sleep I now

<sup>4</sup>to lay France under tribute.

## ELEGIES AND PRAYERS

She took me by the hand and led me a dance,  
 And with her sugared lips on me she smiled;  
 But, what for her dissembled countenance,  
 I could not beware till I was beguiled:  
 Now from this world she hath me exiled  
 When I was lothest hence for to go,  
 And I am in age but, as who saith, a child,  
*Et, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*

I see well they live that double my years:  
 Thus dealéd this world with me as it list,  
 And hath me made, to you that be my peers,  
 Example to think on, had I wist.  
 I storéd my coffers and also my chest:  
 With taskès<sup>1</sup> taking of the commonalty;  
 I took their treasure, but of their prayers missed;  
 Whom I beseech with pure humility  
 For to forgive and have on me pity:  
 I was your king, and kept you from your foe.  
 I would now amend, but that will not be,  
*Quia, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*

I had enough, I held me not content  
 Without remembránce that I should die;  
 And more ever to increase was mine intent,  
 I knew not how long I should it occupy<sup>2</sup>:  
 I made the Tower strong, I wist not why;  
 I knew not to whom<sup>3</sup> I purchased Tattershall;  
 I amended Dover on the mountain high,  
 And London I provoked to fortify the wall;  
 I made Nottingham a place full royall,  
 Windsor, Eltham, and many other mo:  
 Yet, at the last, I went from them all,  
*Et, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*

Where<sup>\*</sup> is now my conquest and my victory?  
 Where is my riches and my royal array?

<sup>1</sup>taxes.<sup>2</sup>possess it, use it.<sup>3</sup>i.e. for whom.



Where be my coursers and my horses high?  
 Where is my mirth, my solace, and my play?  
 As vanity, to nought all is withered away.  
 O Lady Bess, long for me may ye call!  
 For we are departed<sup>1</sup> till doomés day:  
 But love ye that Lord that is sovereign of all.  
 Where be my castles and buildings royall?  
 But Windsór alone,<sup>2</sup> now I have no mo,  
 And of Eton the prayers perpetuall,  
*Et, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*

Why should a man be proud or presume high?  
 Saint Bernard thereof nobly doth treat,  
 Saith a man is but a sack of stercorry,<sup>3</sup>  
 And shall return unto wormés meat.  
 Why, what 'came of Alexander the Great?  
 Or else of strongé Sampson, who can tell?  
 Were not wormes ordained their flesh to frete<sup>4</sup>?  
 And of Salomon, that was of wit the well?  
 Absolon profferéd his hair for to sell,  
 Yet for all his beauty wormés eat him alsó;  
 And I but late in honour did excel,  
*Et, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*

I have played my pageant, now am I passed;  
 Ye wot well all I was of no great yeld<sup>5</sup>:  
 Thus all thing concluded shall be at the last:  
 When Death approacheth, then lost is the field:  
 Then sithen<sup>6</sup> this world me no longer upheld,  
 Nor nought would conserve me here in my place,  
*In manus tuas, Domine,*<sup>7</sup> my spirit up I yield,  
 Humbly beseeching thee, God, of thy grace!  
 O ye courteous commons, your heartés unbrace<sup>8</sup>  
 Benignly now to pray for me alsó:  
 For right well you know your king I was,  
*Et, ecce, nunc in pulvere dormio!*

<sup>1</sup>parted.      <sup>2</sup>Edward IV was buried at Windsor.      <sup>3</sup>dung.  
<sup>4</sup>gnaw.      <sup>5</sup>age.      <sup>6</sup>since.      <sup>7</sup>Into thy hands, Lord.      <sup>8</sup>open.

UPON THE DOLOROUS DEATH AND MUCH  
LAMENTABLE CHANCE OF THE MOST  
HONOURABLE EARL OF NORTHUMBERLAND

I wail, I weep, I sob, I sigh full sore  
The deadly fate, the doleful destiny  
Of him that is gone, alas, without restore,  
Of the blood royall descending nobelly;  
Whose lordship doubtless was slain lamentably  
Thorough treason against him compassed and wrought,  
True to his prince in word, in deed, and thought.

Of heavenly poets, O Clio called by name,  
In the College of Muses goddess historiall,  
Address thee to me which am both halt and lame  
In elect utterance to make memoriall!  
To thee for succour, to thee for help I call,  
Mine homely rudeness and dryness to expell  
With the freshè waters of Heliconès well.

Of noble acts anciently enrolled  
Of famous princes and lords of estate,  
By thy report are wont to be extolled,  
Registering truely every former date;  
Of thy bountie after the usual rate  
Kindle in me such plenty of thy nobless  
These sorrowful ditties that I may shew express.

In seasons passed, who hath heard or seen  
Of former writing by any president  
That villeins hastards<sup>1</sup> in their furious tene,<sup>2</sup>  
Fulfilléd with malice of froward intent,  
Confettered<sup>3</sup> together of common consent  
Falsely to slay their most singular good lord?  
It may be registeréd of shameful record.

<sup>1</sup>rash fellows.

<sup>2</sup>wrath.

<sup>3</sup>confederated.

So noble a man, so valiant lord and knight,  
 Fulfilled with honour, as all the world doth ken;  
 At his commandment which had both day and night  
 Knightes and squires, at every season when  
 He call'd upon them, as menial household men:  
 Were not these commons uncourteous karls of kind<sup>1</sup>  
 To slay their own lord? God was not in their mind!

And were not they to blame, I say, alsó,  
 That were about him, his owen servants of trust,  
 To suffer him slain of his mortall foe?  
 Fled away from him, let him lie in the dust;  
 They 'bode not till the reckoning were discussed.  
 What should I flatter? what should I glose or paint?  
 Fie, fie for shame, their hearts were too faint!

In England and France which greatly was redoubted,<sup>2</sup>  
 Of whom both Flanders and Scotland stood in drede,  
 To whom great estates obeyed and lowted,<sup>3</sup>  
 A meiny<sup>4</sup> of rude villains made him for to bleed;  
 Unkindly they slew him that help them oft at need:  
 He was their bulwark, their paves,<sup>5</sup> and their wall,  
 Yet shamefully they slew him: that shame may them befall!

I say, ye commoners, why were ye so stark mad?  
 What frantic frenzy fell in your brain?  
 Where was your wit and reason ye should have had?  
 What wilful folly made you rise again<sup>6</sup>  
 Your natural lord? alas, I cannot sayne.  
 Ye armed you with will, and left your wit behind:  
 Well may you be called commons most unkind!

He was your chieftain, your shield, your chief defence,  
 Ready to assist you in every time of need;

<sup>1</sup>churls by nature.    <sup>2</sup>dreaded.    <sup>3</sup>bowed.    <sup>4</sup>band.

<sup>5</sup>shield.    <sup>6</sup>against.

Your worship<sup>1</sup> depended of his excellence:  
 Alas, ye madmen, too far ye did exceed;  
 Your hap was unhappy, too ill was your speed.  
 What movéd you against him to war or to fight?  
 What ailed you to slay your lord against all right?

The ground of his quarrel was for his sovereign lord,  
 The well concerning of all the whole land,  
 Demanding such duties as needs must accord  
 To the right of his prince, which should not be withstand;  
 For whose cause ye slew him with your owen hand.  
 But had his noblemen done well that day  
 Ye had not been able to have said him nay.

But there was false packing, or else I am beguiled.  
 How be it, the matter was evident and plain,  
 For if they had occupiéed their spear and their shield  
 This noble man doubtless had not been slain.  
 But men say they were linkéd with a double chain,  
 And held with the commoners under a cloak,  
 Which kindled the wild fire that made all this smoke.

The commons renied<sup>2</sup> their taxes to pay,  
 Of them demanded and asked by the king;  
 With one voice importune they plainly said nay;  
 They buskt them on a bushment<sup>3</sup> themselves in bale<sup>4</sup> to  
 bring,  
 Against the king's pleasure to wrestle or to wring;  
 Bluntly as beastès with boast and with cry.  
 They said they forsed not,<sup>5</sup> nor cared not to die.

The nobleness of the north, this valiant lord and knight,  
 As man that was innocent of treachery or train,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>honour.    <sup>2</sup>refused.    <sup>3</sup>got ready in ambush.    <sup>4</sup>trouble.  
<sup>5</sup>regarded it not.    <sup>6</sup>deceit.

Pressed forth boldly to withstand their might,  
And, like martial Hector, he fought them again,<sup>1</sup>  
Vigorously upon them with might and with main,  
Trusting in noblemen that were with him there:  
But all they fled from him for falsehood or fear.

Barons, knights, squires, one and all,  
Together with servants of his family,  
Turned their backs, and let their master fall,  
Of whose life they counted not a fly:  
Take up whose wold,<sup>2</sup> for there they let him lie.  
Alas, his gold, his fee, his annual rent  
Upon such a sort was ill bestowed and spent!

He was environ'd about on every side  
With his enemies, that were stark mad and wood<sup>3</sup>;  
Yet whiles he stood he gave them woundes wide.  
Alas for ruth! what though his mind were good,  
His courage manly, yet there he shed his blood:  
All left alone, alas, he fought in vain!  
For cruelly among them there he was slain.

Alas for pity that Percy thus was spilt,<sup>4</sup>  
The famous Earl of Northumberland!  
Of knightly prowess the sword, pommel, and hilt,  
The mighty lion 'doubted<sup>5</sup> by sea and land:  
O dolorous chance of Fortune's froward hand!  
What man, rememb'ring how shamefully he was slain,  
From bitter weeping himself can restrain?

O cruel Mars, thou deadly god of war!  
O dolorous Tuésday<sup>6</sup> dedicate to thy name,  
When thou shook thy sword so noble a man to mar!  
O ground ungracious, unhappy be thy fame,  
Which wert endyéd with red blood of the same  
Most noble earl! O foul misuséd ground  
Whereon he gat his final deadly wound!

<sup>1</sup>fought against them.    <sup>2</sup>take him up who would.    <sup>3</sup>frantic.

<sup>4</sup>destroyed.    <sup>5</sup>redoubted, feared.    <sup>6</sup>i.e. Mardi.

O Atropos, of the fatal sisters three,  
 Goddess most cruel unto the life of man,  
 All merciless, in thee is no pitie!  
 O homicide, which slayest all that thou can,  
 So forcibly upon this earl thou ran  
 That with thy sword, enharpéd<sup>1</sup> of mortal dread,  
 Thou cut assunder his perfitte vital thread!

My words unpolish'd be, naked and plain,  
 Of aureat poems they want illumining;  
 But by them to knowledge ye may attain  
 Of this lord's death and of his murdering;  
 Which whiles he lived had foison of everything,  
 Of knights, of squires, chief lord of tower and town,  
 Till fickle Fortune began on him to frown.

Paregal<sup>2</sup> to dukes, with kings he might compare,  
 Surmounting in honour all earls he did exceed;  
 To all countries about him report me I dare;  
 Like to Aeneas benign in word and deed,  
 Valiant as Hector in every martial need,  
 Provident, discreet, circumspect, and wise,  
 Till the chance ran against him of Fortune's double dice.

What needeth me for to extol his fame  
 With my rude pen encanker'd all with rust,  
 Whose noble acts shew worshiply his name,  
 Transcending far mine homely Muse, that must  
 Yet somewhat write, surpris'd with hearty lust,<sup>3</sup>  
 Truly reporting his right noble estate,  
 Immortally which is immaculate?

His noble blood never destainéd was,  
 True to his prince for to defend his right,  
 Doubtless hating false matters to compâss,  
 Traitory<sup>4</sup> and treason he banish'd out of sight,  
 With truth to meddle was all his whole delight,

<sup>1</sup>edged with.<sup>2</sup>Equal.<sup>3</sup>overcome with grief.

As all his country can testify the same:  
To slay such a lord, alas, it was great shame!

If the whole choir of the Muses nine  
In me all only were set and comprised,  
Enbreathed with the blast of influence divine,  
As perfectly as could be thought or devised:  
To me also although it were promised  
Of laureat Phoebus wholly the eloquence,  
All were too little for his magnificence.

O young lion, but tender yet of age,  
Grow and increase, remember thine estate;  
God thee assist unto thine heritage,  
And give thee grace to be more fortunate!  
Against rebellion's arm thee to make debate;  
And, as the lion, which is of beasts king,  
Unto thy subjects be courteous and benign.

I pray God send thee prosperous life and long,  
Stable thy mind constant to be and fast,  
Right to maintain, and to resist all wrong:  
All flattering faytors<sup>1</sup> abhor and from thee cast;  
Of foul detraction God keep thee from the blast!  
Let double dealing in thee have no place,  
And be not light of credence in no case.

With heavy cheer, with dolorous heart and mind,  
Each man may sorrow in his inward thought  
This lord's death, whose peer is hard to find,  
Algife<sup>2</sup> England and France were thorough sought.  
All kings, all princes, all dukes, well they ought,  
Both temporal and spiritual, for to complain  
This noble man that cruelly was slain.

More specially barons, and those knights bold,  
And all other gentlemen with him entertained

<sup>1</sup>dissemblers.

<sup>2</sup>Although.

In fee, as menial men of his household,  
 Whom he as lord worshiply maintained:  
 To sorrowful weeping they ought to be constrained  
 As oft as they call to their remembrance  
 Of their good lord the fate and deadly chance.

O peerless Prince of heaven imperial,  
 That with one word formed all things of nought!  
 Heaven, hell, and earth obey unto thy call;  
 Which to thy resemblance wond'rously hast wrought  
 All mankind, whom thou full dear hast bought,  
 With thy blood precious our finance did'st pay,  
 And us redeeméd from the fiend's prey;

To thee pray we, as Prince incomparable,  
 As thou art of mercy and pity the well,  
 Thou bring unto thy joy interminable  
 The soul of this lord from all danger of hell,  
 In endless bliss with thee to 'bide and dwell  
 In thy palace above the orient,  
 Where thou art Lord and God omnipotent.

O Queen of Mercy, O Lady full of grace,  
 Maiden most pure, and Goddess Mother dear,  
 To sorrowful hearts chief comfort and solace,  
 Of all women O flower withouten peer!  
 Pray to thy Son above the star's clear,  
 He to vouchsafe, by thy mediation,  
 To pardon thy servant, and bring to salvation.

In joy triumphant the heavenly hierarchy,  
 With all the whole sort<sup>1</sup> of that glorious place,  
 His soul may receive into their company,  
 Thorough bounty of Him that formed all solace:  
 Well of pity, of mercy, and of grace,  
 The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost,  
 In Trinitate one God of might's most!

<sup>1</sup>company.



## ON TIME

Ye may hear now, in this rime,  
How every thing must have a time.

Time is a thing that no man may resist;  
Time is transitory and irrevocable;  
Who sayeth the contrary, Time passeth as him list<sup>1</sup>;  
Time must be taken in season covenable<sup>2</sup>;  
Take Time when Time is, for Time is aye mutable;  
All thing hath time who can for it provide;  
Bide for Time who will, for Time will no man bide.

Time to be sad, and time to play and sport;  
Time to take rest by way of recreation;  
Time to study, and time to use comfort;  
Time of pleasure, and time of consolation:  
Thus Time hath his time of divers manner fashion:  
Time for to eat and drink for thy repast;  
Time to be liberal, and time to make no wast:

Time to travail, and time for to rest;  
Time for to speak, and time to hold thy peace:  
Time would be uséd when Time is best;  
Time to begin, and time for to cease;  
And when time is, to put thyself in prease,<sup>3</sup>  
And when time is, to hold thyself aback:  
For time well spent can never have lack.

The rootés take their sap in time of vere<sup>4</sup>;  
In time of summer flowers fresh and green;  
In time of harvest men their corné shere;  
In time of winter the north wind waxeth keen,  
So bitterly biting the flowers be not seen:  
The calends of Janus, with his frostés hoar,  
That time is when people must live upon the store.

<sup>1</sup>as pleases him.    <sup>2</sup>fit.    <sup>3</sup>press, throng.    <sup>4</sup>spring.

## WOEFULLY ARRAYED

Woefully arrayed,  
My blood, man,  
For thee ran,  
It may not be nay'd<sup>1</sup>:  
My body blue and wan,  
Woefully arrayed.

Behold me, I pray thee, with thy whole reason,  
And be not so hard-hearted, and for this encheason,<sup>2</sup>  
Sith I for thy soul sake was slain in good season,  
Beguiled and betrayed by Judas' false treason:  
Unkindly entreated,  
With sharp cord sore fretted,  
The Jewés me threatéd:  
They mowéd,<sup>3</sup> they grinned, they scornéd me,  
Condemnéd to death, as thou may'st see,  
Woefully arrayed.

Thus naked am I nailéd, O man, for thy sake!  
I love thee, then love me; why sleepest thou? awake!  
Remember my tender heart-root for thee brake,  
With painés my veinés constrained to crake<sup>4</sup>:  
Thus tuggéd to and fro,  
Thus wrappéd all in woe,  
Whereas never man was so,  
Entreated thus in most cruel wise,  
Was like a lamb offered in sacrifice,  
Woefully arrayed.

Of sharp thorn I have worn a crown on my head,  
So painéd,<sup>5</sup> so strainéd, so ruefull, so red,  
Thus bobbéd,<sup>6</sup> thus robbéd, thus for thy love dead,

<sup>1</sup>denied. . <sup>2</sup>cause. <sup>3</sup>mouthed. <sup>4</sup>crack. <sup>5</sup>beaten.

Unfeigné I deigné my blood for to shed:  
My feet and handes sore  
The sturdy nailés bore:  
What might I suffer more  
Than I have done, O man, for thee?  
Come when thou list, welcome to me,  
Woefully arrayed.

Of record thy good Lord I have been and shall be:  
I am thine, thou art mine, my brother I call thee.  
Thee love I entirely – see what is befall'n me!  
Sore beating, sore threatening, to make thee, man, all free:  
Why art thou unkind?  
Why hast not me in mind?  
Come yet and thou shalt find  
Mine endléss mercie and grace –  
See how a spear my heart did race,<sup>1</sup>  
Woefully arrayed.

Dear brother, no other thing I of thee desire  
But give me thine heart free to reward mine hire:  
I wrought thee, I bought thee from eternal fire:  
I pray thee array thee toward my high empire  
Above the orient,  
Whereof I am regent,  
Lord God omnipotent,  
With me to reign in endless wealth:  
Remember, man, thy soul's health.

Woefully arrayed,  
My blood, man,  
For thee ran,  
It may not be nay'd:  
My body blue and wan,  
Woefully arrayed.

<sup>1</sup>wound.

## PRAYER TO THE FATHER OF HEAVEN

O Radiant Luminary of light interminable,  
Celestial Father, potential God of might,  
Of heaven and earth O Lord incomparable,  
Of all perfections the Essential most perfite!  
O Maker of mankind, that formed day and night,  
Whose power imperial comprehendeth every place!  
Mine heart, my mind, my thought, my whole delight  
Is, after this life, to see thy glorious Face.

Whose magnificence is incomprehensible,  
All arguments of reason which far doth exceed,  
Whose Deity doubtless is indivisible,  
From whom all goodness and virtue doth proceed,  
Of thy support all créatures have need:  
Assist me, good Lord, and grant me of thy grace  
To live to thy pleasure in word, thought, and deed,  
And, after this life, to see thy glorious Face.

## TO THE SECOND PERSON

O benign Jesu, my sovereign Lord and King,  
The only Son of God by filiation,  
The Second Person withouten beginning,  
Both God and man, our faith maketh plain relation,  
Mary thy mother, by way of incarnation,  
Whose glorious passion our soulés doth revive,  
Against all bodily and ghostly tribulation  
Defend me with thy piteous woundés five.

O peerless Prince, painéd to the death,  
Ruefully rent, thy body wan and blo,<sup>1</sup>  
For my redemption gave up thy vital breath,  
Was never sorrow like to thy deadly woe!  
Grant me, out of this world when I shall go,  
Thine endless mercy for my preservative:  
Against the world, the flesh, the devil alsó,  
Defend me with thy piteous woundés five.

<sup>1</sup>livid.

## TO THE HOLY GHOST

O Fiery Fervence, inflaméd with all grace,  
Enkindling hearts with brandès charitable,  
The endless reward of pleasure and solace,  
To the Father and the Son thou are communicable  
*In unitate* which is inseparable!  
O water of life, O well of consolation!  
Against all suggestions deadly and damnable  
Rescue me, good Lord, by your preservation.

To whom is appropriated the Holy Ghost by name,  
The Third Person, one God in Trinity,  
Of perfect love thou art the ghostly flame:  
Of mirror of meekness, peace, and tranquility,  
My comfort, my counsel, my perfect charity!  
O water of life, O well of consolation,  
Against all stormès of hard adversity  
Rescue me, good Lord, by thy preservation.

## UPON A DEAD MAN'S HEAD

*Sent to him from an honourable gentlewoman for a token,  
he devised this ghostly meditation in English covenable, in  
sentence commendable, lamentable, lacrimable, profitable for  
a soul.*

Your ugly token  
My mind hath broken  
From worldly lust:  
For I have discust  
We are but dust,  
And die we must.

It is general  
To be mortal:  
I have well espied  
No man may him hide  
From Death hollow-eyed,  
With sinews witheréd,  
With bones shiveréd,  
With his worm-eaten maw,  
And his ghastly jaw  
Gasping aside,  
Naked of hide,  
Neither flesh nor fell.<sup>1</sup>

Then, by my counsell,  
Look that ye spell  
Well this gospell:  
For whereso we dwell  
Death will us quell,  
And with us mell.<sup>2</sup>

For all our pampered paunches  
There may no fraunchis,<sup>3</sup>  
Nor worldly bliss,

<sup>1</sup>skin.

<sup>2</sup>meddle.

<sup>3</sup>franchise.

Redeem us from this:  
 Our days be dated  
 To be check-mated  
 With draughts of death  
 Stopping our breath:  
 Our eyen sinking,  
 Our bodies stinking,  
 Our gummès grinning,  
 Our soulès brinning.<sup>1</sup>  
 To whom, then, shall we sue,  
 For to have rescue,  
 But to sweet Jesu  
 On us then for to rue?

O goodly Child  
 Of Mary mild,  
 Then be our shield!  
 That we be not exiled  
 To the dun dale  
 Of bootless bale,<sup>2</sup>  
 Nor to the lake  
 Of fiendès blake.<sup>3</sup>

But grant us grace  
 To see thy Face,  
 And to purchase  
 Thine heavenly place,  
 And thy palace  
 Full of solace  
 Above the sky  
 That is so high,  
 Eternally  
 To behold and see  
 The Trinitie!

Amen.

*Myrrès vous y.*

<sup>1</sup>burning.

<sup>2</sup>sorrow.

<sup>3</sup>black.



TO HIS WIFE<sup>1</sup>

'Petually  
Constrained am I  
With weeping eye  
    To mourn and 'plain,

That we so nigh  
Of progeny<sup>2</sup>  
So suddenly  
    Should part in twain.

When ye are gone  
Comfort is none,  
But all alone  
    Endure must I.

With grievly grone  
Making my mone,  
As it were one  
    That should needs die.

What chance<sup>3</sup> suddein,  
So doth me stay'n<sup>4</sup>  
In every way'n  
    That for no thing

I cannot lay'n<sup>5</sup>,  
Nor yet refrain  
Mine eyes twain  
    From sore weeping!

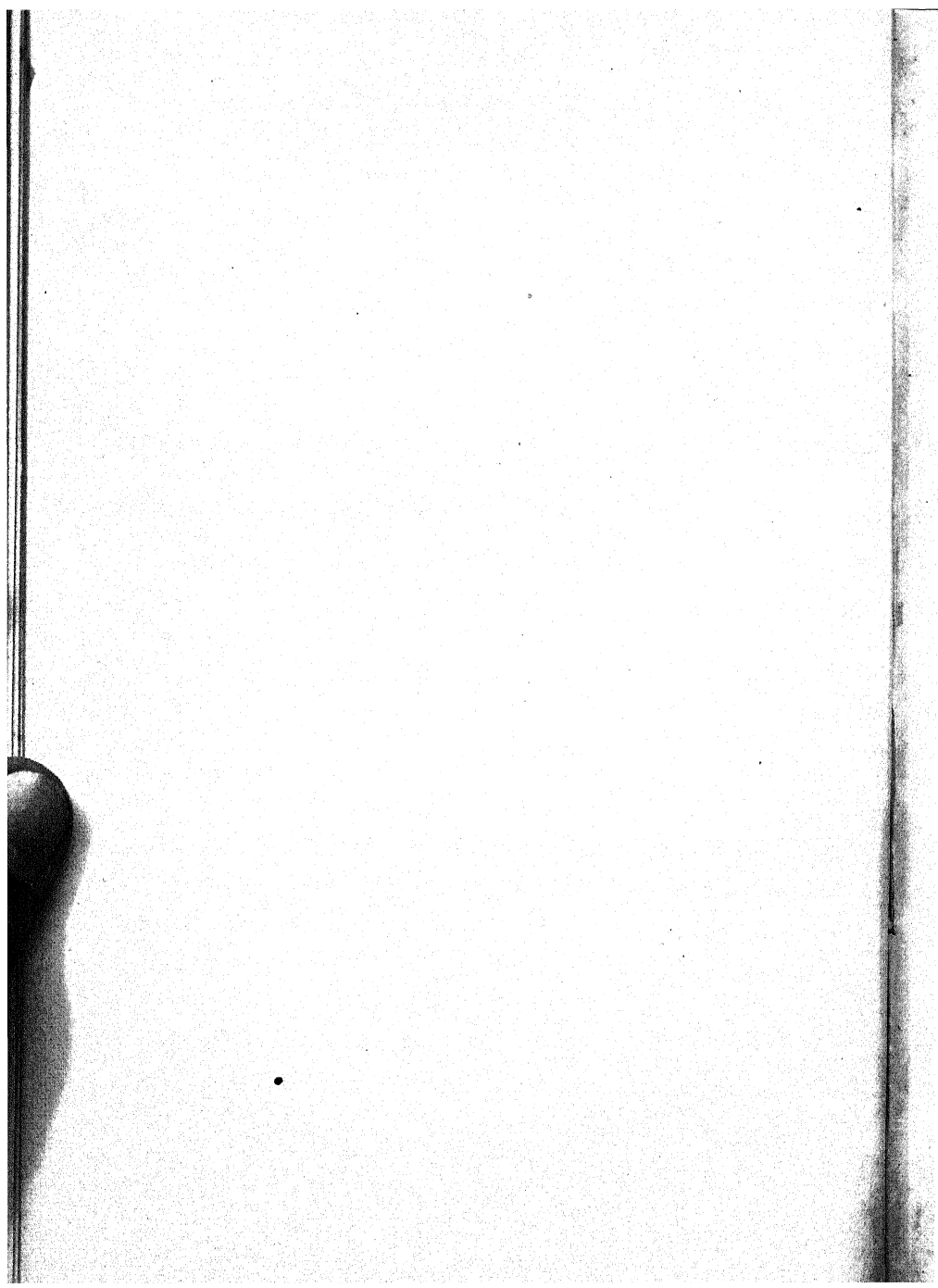
<sup>1</sup>This poem not in Dyce. First printed in the *Athenæum*, November 1873, from MS. belonging to Wm. Bragge of Sheffield (formerly Heber's).

<sup>2</sup>soon to have children.

<sup>3</sup>calamity.

<sup>4</sup>bind.

<sup>5</sup>rest.



## NOW SING WE, AS WE WERE WONT

Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*<sup>1</sup>

The King's banner on field is splay'd,  
The cross's myst'ry cannot be nay'd,<sup>2</sup>  
To whom our Saviour was betray'd,  
And for our sake.  
Thus saith he:  
I suffer for thee,  
My death I take.  
Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

Behold my shanks, behold my knees,  
Behold my head, arms, and thees,<sup>3</sup>  
Behold of me nothing thou sees  
But sorrow and pine<sup>4</sup>:  
Thus was I spilt,<sup>5</sup>  
Man, for thy guilt,  
And not for mine.  
Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

Behold my body, how Jews it dong<sup>6</sup>  
With knots of whipcord and scourges strong:  
As streams of a well the blood outsprong  
On every side.  
The knottès were knit  
Right well with wit,  
They made woundès wide

<sup>1</sup>The King's banners are displayed.  
<sup>4</sup>pain.

<sup>5</sup>destroyed.

<sup>2</sup>denied.

<sup>6</sup>struck.

<sup>3</sup>thighs.

## BALLADS AND DITTIES

Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

Man, thou shalt now understand,  
 Of my head, both foot and hand,  
 Are four c. and five thousand  
 Woundés and sixty;  
 Fifty and vii.

Were told full even

Upon my body.

Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

Sith I for love bought thee so dear,  
 As thou may see thyself here,  
 I pray thee with a right good cheer  
 Love me again:

That it likes<sup>1</sup> me

To suffer for thee

Now all this pain.

Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

Man, understand now thou shall,  
 Instead of drink they gave me gall,  
 And eisell<sup>2</sup> mingled therewithall,

The Jewés fell.

Those pains on me

I suffered for thee

To bring thee fro hell.

Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

Now for thy life thou hast mislead,  
 Mercy to ask be thou not adread:  
 The least drop of blood that I for thee shed  
 Might cleanse thee soon

<sup>1</sup>pleases.

<sup>2</sup>vinegar.

Of all the sin  
The world within  
If thou haddest doon.  
Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt*

I was more wrother with Judas  
For he would no mercy ask  
Than I was for his trespass  
When he me sold;  
I was ever ready  
To grant him mercy,  
But he none wold.<sup>1</sup>  
Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

Lo, how I hold mine arms abroad,  
Thee to receive ready y-spread!  
For the great love that I to thee had  
Well may thou know.  
Some love again  
I would full fain  
Thou wouldest to me show.  
Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

For love I ask nothing of thee  
But stand fast in faith, and sin thou flee,  
And pain<sup>2</sup> to live in honestie  
Both night and day;  
And thou shalt have bliss  
That never shall miss<sup>3</sup>  
Withouten nay.<sup>4</sup>  
Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

<sup>1</sup>would.<sup>2</sup>strive.<sup>3</sup>fail.<sup>4</sup>Assuredly.

## BALLADS AND DITTIES

Now, Jesu, for thy great goodness,  
That for men suffered great hardness,  
Save us from the devil's cruelty,  
And to bliss us send,  
And grant us grace  
To see thy Face  
Withouten end.

Now sing we, as we were wont,  
*Vexilla regis prodeunt.*

A LAUD AND PRAISE MADE FOR OUR  
SOVEREIGN LORD THE KING

The Rose both White and Red  
In one Rose now doth grow:  
Thus thorough every sted<sup>1</sup>  
Thereof the fame doth blow.  
Grace the seed did sow:  
England, now gather floures,  
Exclude now all doloures.

Noble Henry the Eight,  
Thy loving sovereign lord,  
Of kinges line most straight  
His title doth record:  
In whom doth well accord  
Alexis young of age,  
Adrastus wise and sage,

Astrea, Justice hight,  
That from the starry sky  
Shall now come and do right.  
This hundred year scantly  
A man could not espy  
That Right dwelt us among,  
And that was the more wrong.

Right shall the foxes chare,<sup>2</sup>  
The wolues, the beares alsó,  
That wrought have much care,  
And brought England in woe:  
They shall worry no mo,  
Nor root the Rosary<sup>3</sup>  
By extort treachery.

<sup>1</sup>place.

<sup>2</sup>chase away.

<sup>3</sup>Rose-tree.

## BALLADS AND DITTIES

Of this our noble king  
 The law they shall not break;  
 They shall come to reckoning;  
 No man for them will speak:  
 The people durst not creke<sup>1</sup>  
 Their griefes to complain,  
 They brought them in such pain.

Therefore no more they shall  
 The commons overbace,<sup>2</sup>  
 That wont were over all  
 Both lord and knight to face<sup>3</sup>:  
 For now the years of grace  
 And wealth are come again,  
 That maketh England fain.<sup>4</sup>

Adonis of fresh colour,  
 Of youth the goodly floure,  
 Our prince of high honour,  
 Our paves,<sup>5</sup> our succour,  
 Our king, our emperour,  
 Our Priamus of Troy,  
 Our wealth, our worldly joy:

Upon us he doth reign,  
 That maketh our heartes glad,  
 As king most sovereign  
 That ever England had;  
 Demure, sober, and sad,<sup>6</sup>  
 And Martis lusty knight;  
 God save him in his right!

Amen.

<sup>1</sup>make an outcry.

<sup>2</sup>over-awe.

<sup>3</sup>vaunt.

<sup>4</sup>glad.

<sup>5</sup>shield

<sup>6</sup>discreet.



## LULLAY, LULLAY, LIKE A CHILD

With lullay, lullay, like a child,  
Thou sleep'st too long, thou art beguiled.

My darling dear, my daisy floure,  
Let me, quod he, lie in your lap.  
Lie still, quod she, my paramoure,  
Lie still hardlie,<sup>1</sup> and take a nap.  
His head was heavy, such was his hap,  
All drowsy dreaming, drowned in sleep,  
That of his love he took no keep,  
With hey lullay, lullay, like a child,  
Thou sleep'st too long, thou art beguiled.

With ba, ba, ba! and bas, bas, bas!<sup>2</sup>  
She cherished him both cheek and chin,  
That he wist never where he was:  
He had forgotten all deadly sin.  
He wanted wit her love to win:  
He trusted her payment and lost all his pay;  
She left him sleeping and stole away,  
With hey lullay, lullay, like a child,  
Thou sleep'st too long, thou art beguiled.

The rivers rough, the waters wan,  
She sparéd not to wet her feet;  
She waded over, she found a man  
That halséd<sup>3</sup> her heartily and kissed her sweet:  
Thus after her cold she caught a heat.  
My love, she said, routeth<sup>4</sup> in his bed;  
Ywis<sup>5</sup> he hath an heavy head,  
With hey lullay, lullay, like a child,  
Thou sleep'st too long, thou art beguiled.

<sup>1</sup>with confidence.

<sup>2</sup>embraced her.

<sup>3</sup>With kissings, and kiss me.

<sup>4</sup>snores.

<sup>5</sup>Assuredly.

What dream'st thou, drunkard, drowsy pate?  
Thy lust and liking is from thee gone;  
Thou blinkard blowball,<sup>1</sup> thou wakest too late,  
Behold thou liest, luggard, alone!  
Well may thou sigh, well may thou groan,  
To deal with her so cowardly:  
Ywis, pole hatchet,<sup>2</sup> she bleared thin eye.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>blink-eyed drunkard.

<sup>2</sup>a man who gossips around an ale-pole, the sign of an inn.

<sup>3</sup>did you in the eye.

THE ANCIENT ACQUAINTANCE, MADAM,  
BETWEEN US TWAIN

The ancient acquaintance, madam, between us twain,  
The familiaritie, the former daliance,  
Causeth me that I cannot myself refrain  
But that I must write for my pleasant pastance<sup>1</sup>:  
Rememb'ring your passing goodly countenance,  
Your goodly port, your beauteous visage,  
Ye may be counted comfort of all corage.<sup>2</sup>

Of all your features favourable to make true description,  
I am insufficient to make such enterprise:  
For this dare I say, without contradiction,  
That Dame Melanippe was never half so wise:  
Yet so it is that a rumour begineth for to rise  
How in good horsemen ye set your whole delight,  
And have forgotten your old true loving knight.

With bound and rebound bouncingly take up  
His gentle curtál, and set nought by small nags!  
Spur up at the hinder girth, with, Gup, morell, \* gup!  
With, Jayst ye, jennet of Spain, for your tail wags!  
Ye cast all your corage<sup>4</sup> upon such courtly hags.  
Have in<sup>5</sup> sergeant farrier, my horse behind is bare;  
He rideth well the horse – but he rideth better the mare!

Ware, ware, the mare winceth with her wanton heel!  
She kicketh with her calkins and keyleth with a clench;

<sup>1</sup>pastime.

<sup>2</sup>all hearts (*sic*).

<sup>3</sup>a black horse.

<sup>4</sup>affection.

<sup>5</sup>Bring in.

She goeth wide behind, and heweth<sup>1</sup> never a dele<sup>2</sup>:

Ware galling in the withers, ware of that wrench<sup>3</sup>!

It is perilous for a horseman to dig in the trench.

This grieveth your husband, that right gentle knight,  
And so with your servantès he fiercely doth fight.

So fiercely he fighteth, his mind is so fell,

That he driveth them down with dints on their day-  
watch;

He bruise<sup>t</sup>h their brainpannès and maketh them to swell,

Their browès all to-broken, such clappès they catch;

Whose jealousy malicious maketh them to leap the hatch<sup>4</sup>;

By their cognizance<sup>5</sup> knowing how they serve a wily pie<sup>6</sup>:

Ask all your neighbours whether that I lie.

It can be no counsel that is cried at the cross<sup>7</sup>:

For your gentle husband sorrowful am I;

Howbeit, he is not first hath had a loss:

Advertising you, madam, to work more secretly,

Let not all the world make an outcry:

Play fair play, madam, and look ye play clean,

Or else with great shame your game will be seen.

<sup>1</sup>colours, blushes (perhaps).

<sup>2</sup>never a bit.

<sup>3</sup>wile – the passage is, of course, metaphorical, and refers to the lady's intimacy with her stablemen.

<sup>4</sup>the half-door of the stable.

<sup>5</sup>the badge worn by servants.

<sup>6</sup>magpie (double reference to the knight's coat of arms and to the lady).

<sup>7</sup>no secret that is proclaimed in the market-place.

## KNOWLEDGE, ACQUAINTANCE, RESORT, FAVOUR WITH GRACE

Knowledge, acquaintance, resort, favour with grace;  
 Delight, desire, respite with liberty;  
 Corage<sup>1</sup> with lust, convenient time and space;  
 Disdains, distress, exiléd cruelty;  
 Wordés well set with good hability;  
 Demure demeanour, womanly of port;  
 Transcending pleasure, surmounting all disport;

Electuary arrected<sup>2</sup> to redress<sup>3</sup>  
 These fervourous axes, <sup>4</sup> the deadly woe and pain  
 Of thoughtful heartès plunged in distress;  
 Refreshing mindès<sup>5</sup> the April shower of rain;  
 Conduit of comfort, and well most soveréign;  
 Herber<sup>6</sup> enverdured, continual fresh and green;  
 Of lusty summer the passing goodly queen;

The topaz rich and precious in vertué;  
 Your ruddies<sup>7</sup> with ruddy rubies may compare;  
 Saphire of sadness, enveined with Indy blue;  
 The polished pearl your whiteness doth declare;  
 Diamond pointed to rase out heartly care;  
 Gain<sup>8</sup> surfeitous suspect the emerald commendable;  
 Relucent smaradge,<sup>9</sup> object incomparable;

Encircléd mirror and perspective most bright;  
 Illuminé with features far passing my report;  
 Radiant Hesperus, star of the cloudy night,  
 Lode-star to light these lovers to their port,  
 Gain dangerous stormès their ancor to support,

<sup>1</sup>Affection.      <sup>2</sup>empowered.      <sup>3</sup>relieve.      <sup>4</sup>paroxysms.

<sup>5</sup>as (understood).      <sup>6</sup>Arbour.      <sup>7</sup>blushes.

<sup>8</sup>Against.      <sup>9</sup>a lighter coloured emerald

Their sail of solace most comfortably clad,  
Which to behold maketh heavy heartes glad:

Remorse<sup>1</sup> have I of your most goodlihood,<sup>2</sup>  
Of your behaviour courteous and benign,  
Of your bounty and of your womanhood,  
Which maketh my heart oft to leap and spring,  
And to remember many a pretty thing:  
But absence, alas, with trembling fear and dread  
Abasheth me, albeit I have no need.

You I assure, absence is my foe,  
My deadly woe, my painful heaviness;  
And if ye list to know the cause why so  
Open mine heart, behold my mind express:  
I would ye could! then should ye see, mistress,  
How there nis<sup>3</sup> thing that I covet so fain  
As to embrace you in mine armes twain.

Nothing earthly to me more desirous  
Than to behold your beauteous countenance:  
But, hateful Absence, to me so envious,  
Though thou withdraw me from her by long distance,  
Yet shall she never out of my remembrance:  
For I have gravéd her within the secret wall  
Of my true heart, to love her best of all!

<sup>1</sup>Remembrance.

<sup>2</sup>perfect goodness.

<sup>3</sup>is not.

THOUGH YE SUPPOSE ALL JEOPARDIES ARE  
PASSED

Though ye suppose all jeopardies are passed,  
And all is done that ye lookéd for before,  
Ware yet, I rede<sup>1</sup> you, of Fortune's double cast,  
For one false point she is wont to keep in store,  
And under the fell<sup>2</sup> oft festeréd is the sore:  
That when ye think all danger for to pass  
Ware of the lizard lieth lurking in the grass.

<sup>1</sup>advise.

<sup>2</sup>skin.

GO, PITEOUS HEART, RASÉD WITH DEADLY  
WOE

Go, piteous heart, raséd<sup>1</sup> with deadly woe,  
Piercéd with pain, bleeding with woundés smart,  
Bewail thy fortune, with veinés wan and blo.<sup>2</sup>  
O Fortune unfriendly, Fortune unkind thou art  
To be so cruel and so overthwart,<sup>3</sup>  
To suffer me so carefully to endure  
That where I love best I dare not discure<sup>4</sup>!

One there is, and ever one shall be,  
For whose sake my heart is sore diseaséd;  
For whose love welcome disease to me!  
I am content so all parties be pleaséd:  
Yet, an God would, I would my pain were easéd!  
But Fortune enforceth me so carefully to endure  
That where I love best I dare not discure!

*At the instance of a noble lady.*

<sup>1</sup>wounded.    <sup>2</sup>livid.    <sup>3</sup>perverse.    <sup>4</sup>discover (myself).



## WOMANHOOD, WANTON, YE WANT

Womanhood, wanton, ye want:

Your meddling, mistress, is mannerless;

Plenty of ill, of goodness scant,

Ye rail at riot, reckeless:

To praise your port it is needeless;

For all your draffe<sup>1</sup> yet and your dregs,

As well borne as ye full oft time begs.

Why so coy and full of scorn?

Mine horse is sold, I ween, you say;

My new furred gown, when it is worn . . .

Put up your purse, ye shall not pay!

By crede, I trust to see the day,

As proud as a pea-hen as ye spread,

Of me and other ye may have need.

Though angelic be your smiling,

Yet is your tongue an adder's tail,

Full like a scorpion stinging

All those by whom ye have avail.

Good mistress Anne, there ye do shail<sup>2</sup>:

What prate ye, pretty pigesnye<sup>3</sup>?

I trust to 'quite you ere I die!

Your key is meet for every lock,

Your key is common and hangeth out;

Your key is ready, we need not knock,

Nor stand long wresting there about;

Of your door-gate ye have no doubt:

But one thing is, that ye be lewd:

Hold your tongue now, all beshrewd!

To Mistress Anne, that farly sweet,<sup>4</sup>

That wones<sup>5</sup> at The Key in Thames Street

<sup>1</sup>refuse.

<sup>2</sup>walk crookedly.

<sup>3</sup>darling

<sup>4</sup>strange sweet one.

<sup>5</sup>dwells.

TO MISTRESS ANNE <sup>1</sup>

Mistress Anne,  
I am your man,  
As you may well espy.  
If you will be  
Content with me,  
I am your man.

But if you will  
Keep company still  
With every knave that comes by,  
Then you will be  
Forsaken of me,  
That <sup>2</sup>am your man.

But if you fain,  
I tell you plain,  
That <sup>3</sup>I presently shall die,  
I will not such  
As loves too much,  
That am your man.

For if you can  
Love every man  
That can flatter and lie,  
Then are ye  
No match for me,  
That am your man.

For I will not take  
No such kind of make <sup>4</sup>  
(May all full well it trie <sup>5</sup>!),  
But off will ye cast  
At any blast,  
That am your man.

<sup>1</sup>MS. Trin. Coll. Cam., o.2. 53, fol. 165<sup>b</sup>, first printed by Brie.  
*Skelton-Studien*, Eng. Stud.

<sup>2</sup>'I' in MS.    <sup>3</sup>'If' in MS.    <sup>4</sup>mate.    <sup>5</sup>experience.

## JOLLY RUTTERKIN<sup>1</sup>

Hoyda, jolly rutterkin,<sup>2</sup> hoyda!  
Like a rutterkin hoyda.

Rutterkin is come unto our town  
In a cloak without coat or gown,  
Save a ragged hood to cover his crown,  
Like a rutter hoyda.

Rutterkin can speak no English,  
His tongue runneth all on buttered fish,  
Besmeared with grease about his dish,  
Like a rutter hoyda.

Rutterkin shall bring you all good luck,  
A stoup of beer up at a pluck,<sup>3</sup>  
Till his brain be as wise as a duck,  
Like a rutter hoyda.

When rutterkin from board will rise,  
He will piss a gallon pot full a-twice,  
And the overplus under the table of the new guise,  
Like a rutter hoyda.

<sup>1</sup>From the Fairfax MS. (5465, B.M.), from which also is taken *Woefully Arrayed* and *Mannerly Margery*. Dyce says that "there is a probability" that this song was composed by Skelton. Moreover, in *Magnificence*, Courtly Abusion comes in singing part of it. It is possible that Skelton would make his character quote one of his own songs. It is possible, too, that some of the other songs in this MS., still unprinted, are by Skelton. *Margaret Meek*, for instance, and another poem in the manner of *Woefully Arrayed*.

<sup>2</sup>Dashing fellow, gay spark. See Riot in *Bouge of Court*. <sup>3</sup>gulp.

## MANNERLY MARGERY MILK AND ALE

Ay, beshrew you! by my fay,  
These wanton clerks be nice<sup>1</sup> alway!  
Avaunt, avaunt, my popinjay!  
What, will you do nothing but play?  
Tilly vally straw, let be I say!  
Gup, Christian Clout, gup, Jack of the Vale!  
With Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale.

By God, ye be a pretty pode,<sup>2</sup>  
And I love you an whole cart-load.  
Straw, James Foder, ye play the fode,<sup>3</sup>  
I am no hackney<sup>4</sup> for your rode<sup>5</sup>:  
Go watch a bull, your back is broad!  
Gup, Christian Clout, gup, Jack of the Vale!  
With Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale.

Ywis ye deal uncourteously;  
What, would ye frumple<sup>6</sup> me? now fy!  
What, and ye shall be my pigesnye?  
By Christ, ye shall not, no hardely:  
I will not be japéd<sup>7</sup> bodily!  
Gup, Christian Clout, gup, Jack of the Vale!  
With Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale.

Walk forth your way, ye cost me nought;  
Now have I found that I have sought:  
The best cheap flesh that ever I bought.  
Yet, for His love that all hath wrought,  
Wed me, or else I die for thought.  
Gup, Christian Clout, your breath is stale!  
Go, Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale!  
Gup, Christian Clout, gup, Jack of the Vale!  
With Mannerly Margery Milk and Ale.

<sup>1</sup>saucy.

<sup>2</sup>toad (perhaps).

<sup>3</sup>seducer.

<sup>4</sup>hack, whore.

<sup>5</sup>rod.

<sup>6</sup>rumple.

<sup>7</sup>joked with, in the sense of raped.

*Here beginneth a little Treatise named*

THE BOUGE OF COURT<sup>1</sup>

*The Prologue to the Bouge of Court*

In autumn, when the sun in Virgine  
By radiant heat enripéd hath our corn;  
When Luna, full of mutability,  
As emperess the diadem hath worn  
Of our pole arctic, smiling half in scorn  
At our folly and our unsteadfastness;  
The time when Mars to warrè him did 'dress,<sup>2</sup>

I, calling to mind the great authority  
Of poetès old, which full craftily,  
Under as covert termès as could be,  
Can touch a truth and cloak it subtilly  
With freshè utterance full sententiously,  
Diverse of style, some spared not vice to wite,<sup>3</sup>  
Some of morality nobly did endite;

Wherby I rede<sup>4</sup> their renown and their fame  
May never die, but evermore endure:  
I was sore movéd to aforce<sup>5</sup> the same,  
But Ignorance full soon did me discure,<sup>6</sup>  
And shewed that in this art I was not sure;  
For to illumine, she said, I was too dull,  
Advising me my pen away to pull,

And not to write: for he so will attain  
Exceeding further than his conning<sup>7</sup> is,

<sup>1</sup>The Rewards of Court.    <sup>2</sup>prepare.    <sup>3</sup>blame.  
<sup>4</sup>reckon.    <sup>5</sup>attempt.    <sup>6</sup>discover.    <sup>7</sup>knowledge.

## THE BOUGE OF COURT

His head may be hard, but feeble is his brain,  
Yet have I knowen such ere this.

But of reproach surely he may not miss  
That climbeth higher than he may footing have:  
What an he slide down, who shall him save?

Thus up and down my mind was drawn and cast,  
That I ne wist<sup>1</sup> what to do was best;  
So sore enwearied, that I was at the last  
Enforced to sleep and for to take some rest,  
And to lie down as soon as I me 'dressed.<sup>2</sup>  
At Harwich port slumb'ring as I lay  
In mine hostës house, called Powers Key,

Methought I saw a ship, goodly of sail,  
Come sailing forth into the haven broad,  
Her tackeling rich and of high appareil:  
She cast an ancor, and there she lay at road.<sup>3</sup>  
Merchants her boarded to see what she had load.  
Therein they found royal merchandise,  
Fraughted with pleasure of what ye could devise.

But then I thought I would not dwell behind;  
Among all others I put myself in press.  
Then there could I none acquaintance find:  
There was much noise; anon one cried, "Cease!"  
Sharply commanding each man hold his peace.  
"Maisters," he said, "the ship that ye here see  
The Bouge of Court it hight for certaintie.

"The owner thereof is lady of estate  
Whose name to tell is Dame Saunce-pere<sup>4</sup>;  
Her merchandise is rich and fortunate,  
But who will have it must pay therefor dear;  
This royal chaffer<sup>5</sup> that is shipped here  
Is called Favour to stand in her good grace."  
Then should ye see there pressing in apace

<sup>1</sup>knew not.      <sup>2</sup>prepared.      <sup>3</sup>in harbour.

<sup>4</sup>Peerless.      <sup>5</sup>merchandise.

Of one and other that would this lady see;  
 Which sat behind a traves<sup>1</sup> of silkè fine,  
 Of gold of tissue the finest that might be,  
 In a throne which far clearér did shine  
 Than Phoebus in his sphere celestine;  
 Whose beautie, honour, goodly port  
 I have too little cunning to report.

But of each thing there as I took heed,  
 Among all other was written in her throne  
 In gold letters, these words, which I did read:  
*Gardez le fortune, qui est mauelz et bone!*  
 And, as I stood reading this verse myself alone,  
 Her chief gentlewoman, Danger by her name,  
 Gave me a taunt, and said I was to blame

To be so pert to press so proudly up:  
 She said she trowed that I had eaten sauce;  
 She asked if ever I drank of sauce's cup.  
 And I then softly answered to that clause,  
 That so to say I had given her no cause.  
 Then asked she me, "Sir, so God thee speed,  
 What is thy name?" and I said it was Drede.<sup>2</sup>

"What movéd thee," quod she, "hither to come?"  
 "Forsooth," quod I, "to buy some of your ware."  
 And with that word on me she gave a glome<sup>3</sup>  
 With browès bent, and 'gan on me to stare  
 Full dainously,<sup>4</sup> and fro me she did fare,  
 Leaving me standing as a mazéd man,  
 To whom there came another gentlewoman:

Desire was her name, and so she me told,  
 Saying to me, "Brother, be of good cheer,  
 Abash you not, but hardely be bold,  
 Avaunce yourself to approach and come near:  
 What though our chaffer be never so dear,

<sup>1</sup>curtain.    <sup>2</sup>Modesty.    <sup>3</sup>a frown.    <sup>4</sup>disdainfully.

## THE BOUGE OF COURT

Yet I advise you to speak, for any drede<sup>1</sup>:  
Who spareth to speak, in faith, he spareth to speed."

"Maistress," quod I, "I have none acquaintance

That will for me be mediator and mean;  
And this another, I have but small substance."

"Peace," quod Desire, "ye speak not worth a bean!

If ye have not, in faith, I will you lene<sup>2</sup>  
A precious jewel, no richer in this land:  
Bon Adventure have here now in your hand.

"Shift now therewith, let see, as ye can

In Bouge of Court chevisaunce<sup>3</sup> to make;

For I dare say that there nis earthly man

But, an he can Bon Adventure take,

There can no favour nor friendship him forsake;

Bon Adventure may bring you in such case

That ye shall stand in favour and in grace.

"But of one thing I warn you ere I go:

She that steereth the ship, make her your friend."

"Maistress," quod I, "I pray you tell me why so,

And how I may that way and meanes find."

"Forsooth," quod she, "however blow the wind,

Fortune guideth and ruleth all our ship:

Whom she hateth shall over the seaboard skip;

"Whom she loveth, of all pleasure is rich,

Whiles she laugheth and hath lust for play;

Whom she hateth, she casteth in the ditch,

For when she frowneth, she thinketh to make a fray;

She cherisheth him, and him she casteth away."

"Alas," quod I, "how might I have her sure?"

"In faith," quod she, "by Bon Adventure."

<sup>1</sup>i.e. notwithstanding any fear you may feel.

<sup>2</sup>lend.

<sup>3</sup>achievement.



Thus, in a row, of merchants a great rout  
Sued to Fortune that she would be their friend:  
They throng in fast and flockéd her about;  
And I with them prayed her to have in mind.  
She promised to us all she would be kind:  
Of Bouge of Court she asketh what we would have,  
And we asked Favour, and Favour she us gave.

*Thus endeth the Prologue; and beginneth the  
Bouge of Court briefly compiled.*

## DREDE

The sail is up, Fortune ruleth our helm,  
We want no wind to pass now over all;  
Favour we have tougher than any elm,  
That will abide and never from us fall.  
But under honey oft time lieth bitter gall:  
For, as methought, in our ship I did see  
Full subtil persons, in number four and three.

The first was Favell,<sup>1</sup> full of flattery,  
With fables false that well could feign a tale;  
The second was Suspect, which that daily  
Misdeemed each man, with face deadly and pale;  
And Harvy Hafter, that well could pick a male,<sup>2</sup>  
With other four of their affinity,  
Disdain, Riot, Dissimuler, Subtilty.

Fortune their friend, with whom oft she did dance;  
They could not fail, they thought, they were so sure;  
And oftentimes I would myself advance  
With them to make solace and pleasure.  
But my disport they could not well endure:  
They said they hated for to deal with Drede.\*  
Then Favell 'gan with fair speach me to feed.

<sup>1</sup>Cajolery.

<sup>2</sup>purse.

FAVELL

"No thing earthly that I wonder so sore  
As of your conning,<sup>1</sup> that is so excellent;  
Deinte<sup>2</sup> to have with us such one in store,  
So virtuously that hath his dayès spent;  
Fortune to you gifts of grace hath lent:  
Lo, what it is a man to have conning!  
All earthly tresure it is surmounting.

"Ye be an apt man, as any can be found,  
To dwell with us, and serve my lady's grace;  
Ye be to her, yea, worth a thousand pound!  
I heard her speak of you within short space,  
When there were divers that sore did you menace;  
And, though I say it, I was myself your friend,  
For here be divers to you that be unkind.

"But this one thing: ye may be sure of me;  
For, by that Lord that bought dear all mankind,  
I cannot flatter, I must be plain to thee!  
An ye need ought, man, shew to me your mind,  
For ye have me whom faithful ye shall find;  
Whiles I have ought, by God, thou shalt not lack,  
And if need be, a bold word I dare crack!

"Nay, nay, be sure, whiles I am on your side  
Ye may not fall, trust me, ye may not fail.  
Ye stand in favour, and Fortune is your guide,  
And, as she will, so shall our great ship sail:  
These lewd cockwats<sup>3</sup> shall nevermore prevail  
Against you hardly, therefore be not afraid.  
Farewell till soon, but no word that I said!"

<sup>1</sup>learning.<sup>2</sup>i.e. It is a pleasure.<sup>3</sup>vile cuckolds.

## DREDE

Then thanked I him for his great gentleness.

But, as methought, he wear on him a cloak  
That linéd was with doubtful doubleness;

Methought, of words that he had full a poke;

His stomach stuffed oft times did reboke.<sup>1</sup>

Suspect, methought, met him at a braid,<sup>2</sup>

And I drew near to hark what they two said.

"In faith," quod Suspect, "spake Drede no word of me?"

"Why? what then? wilt thou hinder men to speak?

He saith he cannot well accord with thee."

"Tush," quod Suspect, "go play! him I ne reke<sup>3</sup>!"

"By Christ," quod Favell, "Drede is sullen freke.<sup>4</sup>

What, let us hold him up, man, for a while!"

"Yea so," quod Suspect, "he may us both beguile."

And when he came walking soberly,

With hum and ha, and with a crooked look,

Methought his head was full of jealousy,

His eyen rolling, his handès fast they quoke;

And to meward the straight way he took.

"God speed, brother!" to me quod he then,

And thus to talk with me he began.

## SUSPECT

"Ye remember the gentleman right now

That communed with you, methought a pretty space?

Beware of him, for, I make God avow,

He will beguile you and speak fair to your face.

Ye never dwelt in such another place,

For here is none that dare well another trust — •

But I would tell you a thing, an I durst!

<sup>1</sup>belch.

<sup>2</sup>suddenly.

<sup>3</sup>reck not.

<sup>4</sup>fellow.

"Spake he, i'faith, no word to you of me?  
 I weet, an he did, ye would me tell.  
 I have a favour to you, whereof it be  
 That I must shew you much of my counsell.  
 But I wonder what the devil of hell  
 He said of me when he with you did talk!  
 By mine advise use not with him to walk.

"The sovraneſt thing that any man may have  
 Is little to say, and much to hear and see;  
 For, but I trusted you, so God me save,  
 I would no thing so plain<sup>e</sup> be:  
 To you onlie, methink, I durst shrive me,  
 For now am I plenarely<sup>1</sup> disposed  
 To shew you things that may not be disclosed."

Then I assured him my fidelitie  
 His counsel never to disclose,  
 If he could find in heart to trust<sup>e</sup> me;  
 Else I prayed him, with all my busy cure,  
 To keep it himself, for then he might be sure  
 That no man earthly could him betray,  
 Whiles of his mind it were locked with the key.

"By God," quod he, "thus and thus it is . . ."  
 And of his mind he shewed me all and some.  
 "Farewell," quod he, "we will talk more of this . . ."  
 So he departed where he would be come.  
 I dare not speak, I promised to be dum.  
 But, as I stood musing in my mind,  
 Harvy Hafter came leaping, light as lind.<sup>2</sup>

Upon his breast he bear a versing-box,<sup>3</sup>  
 His throat was clear, and lustily could fain.<sup>4</sup>  
 Methought his gown was all furred with fox,  
 And ever he sang, "*Sith I am nothing plain . . .*"  
 To keep him from picking<sup>5</sup> it was a great<sup>e</sup> pain:

<sup>1</sup>fully.    <sup>2</sup>linden-tree.    <sup>3</sup>dice-box.    <sup>4</sup>sing.    <sup>5</sup>stealing.

He gazed on me with his goatish beard,  
When I looked at him my purse was half-afeard.

## HARVY HAFTER

"Sir, God you save! why look ye so sad?<sup>1</sup>  
What thing is that I may do for you?  
A wonder thing that ye wax not mad:  
For, an I study should as ye do now,  
My wit would waste, I make God avow!  
Tell me your mind: methink ye make a verse;  
I could it scan, an ye would it rehearse!

"But to the point shortly to proceed,  
Where hath your dwelling been ere ye came here?  
For, as I trow, I have seen you indeed  
Ere this, when that ye make me royal cheer.  
Hold up the helm, look up, and let God steer:  
I would be merry, what wind that ever blow!  
*Heave and how rumbelow, . . . row the boat, Norman, row!*

"*Princes of youth* can ye sing by rote?  
*Or shall I sail with you?* a fellowship assay?  
For on the book I cannot sing a note.  
Would to God it would please you some day  
A ballad book before me for to lay,  
And learn me to sing *re mi fa sol!*  
And, when I fail, bob me on the noll.<sup>2</sup>

"Lo, what is to you a pleasure great  
To have that conning and wayes that ye have!  
By Goddès soul, I wonder how ye gate  
So great pleasúre, or who to you it gave.  
Sir, pardon me, I am an homely knave,  
To be with you thus pert and thus bold:  
But ye be welcome to our household!

<sup>1</sup>serious.<sup>2</sup>bang me on the head.

"And, I dare say, there is no man therein  
 But would be glad of your companie.  
 I wist never man that so soon could win  
 The favour that ye have with my ladie.  
 I pray to God that it may never die:  
 It is your fortune for to have that grace:  
 As I be saved, it is a wonder case.

"For, as for me, I served here many a day  
 And yet unneth<sup>1</sup> I can have my living:  
 But I require you no wordè that I say<sup>2</sup>!  
 For, an I know any earthly thing  
 That is against you, ye shall have weeting.<sup>3</sup>  
 And ye be welcome, sir, so God me save:  
 I hope hereafter a friend of you to have."

## DREDE

With that, as he departed so from me,  
 Anon there met with him, as methought,  
 A man, but wonderly beseen<sup>4</sup> was he.  
 He lookéd haughty; he set each man at nought;  
 His gawdy garment with scornès was all wrought;  
 With indignation linéd was his hood:  
 He frowned, as he would swear by Cockès blood.<sup>5</sup>

He bit his lip, he lookéd passing coy;  
 His face was belimmed<sup>6</sup> as bees had him stung:  
 It was no time with him to jape nor toy!  
 Envy had wasted his liver and his lung,  
 Hatred by the heart so had him wrung  
 That he looked pale as ashes to my sight:  
 Disdain, I ween, this comerous<sup>7</sup> crab is hight.

<sup>1</sup>scarcely.    <sup>2</sup>i.e. I beg you not to mention a word of what I say.

<sup>3</sup>knowledge of it.

<sup>4</sup>of strange appearance.

<sup>5</sup>God's blood.

<sup>6</sup>disfigured.

<sup>7</sup>troublesome.

To Harvy Hafter, then, he spake of me,  
And I drew near to hark what they two said.  
"Now," quod Disdain, "as I shall savéd be,  
I have great scorn, and am right evil apayed."  
Then quod Harvy Hafter, "Why art thou so dismayed?"  
"By Christ," quod he, "for it is shame to say:  
To see yon Johan Dawes,<sup>2</sup> that came but yesterday,

"How he is now taken in conceit,<sup>3</sup>  
This Doctor Dawcock, I ween, he hight!  
By Goddès bones, but if we have some slight  
It is like he will stand in our light."  
"By God," quod Harvy, "and it so happen might:  
Let us therefore shortly at a word  
Find some means to cast him overboard."

"By Him that me bought," then quod Disdain,  
"I wonder sore he is in such conceit!"  
"Turd!" quod Hafter, "I will thee nothing layne,<sup>4</sup>  
There must for him be laid some pretty bait;  
We twain, I trow, be not without deceit:  
First pick a quarrel, and fall out with him then,  
And so outface him with a card of ten."<sup>5</sup>

Forthwith he made on me a proud assault,  
With scornful look movéd all in mood<sup>6</sup>;  
He went about to take me in a fault;  
He frowned, he stared, he stampéd where he stood.  
I looked on him, I wend he had been wood.<sup>7</sup>  
He set the arm proudly under the side,  
And in this wise he 'gan with me to chide.

<sup>1</sup>ill-pleased.      <sup>2</sup>i.e. simpleton, daw, as also in Dawcock.

<sup>3</sup>in favour.      <sup>4</sup>conceal.      <sup>5</sup>i.e. a trump card.

<sup>6</sup>anger.      <sup>7</sup>I thought . . . mad.

## DISDAIN

"Rememb'rest thou what thou said yesternight?  
 Wilt thou abide by the wordès again?  
 By God, I have of thee now great despite!  
 I shall thee anger once in every vein:  
 It is great scorn to see such an hayne<sup>1</sup>  
 As thou art, one that came but yesterday,  
 With us old servants suchè maisters to play!

"I tell thee, I am of countenance<sup>2</sup>:  
 What wenest I were? I trow thou know not me!  
 By Goddès wounds, but for displeasance,  
 Of my quarrél soon would I vengéd be.  
 But no force,<sup>3</sup> I shall once meet with thee.  
 Come when it will, oppose thee I shall,  
 Whatsomever adventure thereof fall.

"Trowest thou, drevil<sup>4</sup> I say, thou gawdy knave,  
 That I have deinte<sup>5</sup> to see thee cherished thus?  
 By Goddès side, my sword thy head shall shave!  
 Well, once thou shalt be charmed,<sup>6</sup> ywus.  
 Nay, straw for tales, thou shalt not rule us:  
 We be thy betters, and so thou shalt us take,  
 Or we shall thee out of thy clothès shake!"

## DREDE

With that came Riot, rushing all at once,  
 A rusty gallant, to-ragged and to-rent;  
 And on the board he whirled a pair of bones,<sup>7</sup>  
*Quater trey dew* he clattered as he went:  
 "Now have at all, by Saint Thomas of Kent!"  
 And ever he threw and cast I wote n'ere what:  
 His hair wás grown thorough out his hat.

<sup>1</sup>low fellow.<sup>2</sup>a man of position.<sup>3</sup>no matter.<sup>4</sup>drudge.<sup>5</sup>pleasure.<sup>6</sup>quelled.<sup>7</sup>dice.



Then I beheld how he disguiséd was<sup>1</sup>:

His head was heavy for watching over night,

His eyen bleered, his face shone like a glass;

His gown so short that it ne cover might

His rump, he went so all for summer light!

His hose was garded<sup>2</sup> with a list of green,

Yet at the knee they were broken, I ween.

His coat was checked with patches red and blue;

Of Kirby Kendal<sup>3</sup> was his short demie<sup>4</sup>;

And aye he sang, *In faith, deacon, thou crew*;

His elbow bare, he wear his gear so nigh<sup>5</sup>;

His nose a-dropping, his lippès were full dry;

And by his side his whinard<sup>6</sup> and his pouch,

The devil might dance wherein for any crowch.<sup>7</sup>

Counter<sup>8</sup> he could *O lux* upon a pot,

An ostrich feather of a capon's tail

He set up freshly upon his hat aloft:

"What revel rout!" quod he, an 'gan to rail

How oft he had hit Jennet on the tail,

Of Phillis featuious,<sup>9</sup> and little pretty Kate,

How oft he had knocked at her clickéd gate.

What should I tell more of his ribaldry?

I was ashamed so to hear him prate:

He had no pleasure but in harlotry.

"Ay," quod he, "in the devil's date,

What art thou? I saw thee now but late."

"Forsooth," quod I, "in this court I dwell now."

"Welcome," quod Riot, "I make God avow.

<sup>1</sup>how wretched he was.      <sup>2</sup>braided.

<sup>3</sup>Famous for his manufacture of green cloth.      <sup>4</sup>vest.

<sup>5</sup>clothes so thin (through wear).      <sup>6</sup>sword.

<sup>7</sup>any piece of money.      <sup>8</sup>drum a tattoo (here).      <sup>9</sup>dainty.

"And, sir, in faith why com'st not us among  
 To make thee merry, as other fellows done?  
 Thou must swear and stare, man, all day long,  
 And wake all night, and sleep till it be noon;  
 Thou mayest not study, or muse on the moon;  
 This world is nothing but eat, drink, and sleep,  
 And thus with us good company to keep.

"Pluck up thine heart upon a merry pin,  
 And let us laugh a pluck or twain at nale<sup>1</sup>:  
 What the devil, man, mirth is here within!  
 What, lo man, see here of dice a bale<sup>2</sup>!  
 A birdeling-cast for that is in thy male!  
 Now have at all that lieth upon the board!  
 Fie on these dice, they be not worth a turd!

"Have at the hasard, or at the dozen brown,  
 Or else I pass a penny to a pound!  
 Now, would to God, thou would lay money down!  
 Lord, how that I would cast it full round!  
 Ay, in my pouch a buckle I have found,  
 The arms of Callais, I have no coin nor cross<sup>3</sup>!  
 I am not happy, I run aye on the loss.

"Now run must I to the stewes side<sup>4</sup>  
 To weet if Malkin, my lemman,<sup>5</sup> have got ought:  
 I let her to hire, that men may on her ride,  
 Her armès easy<sup>6</sup> far and near is sought:  
 By Goddès side, since I her hither brought  
 She hath got me more money with her tail  
 Than hath some ship that into Bordews' sail:

"Had I as good an horse as she is a mare  
 I durst adventure to journey thorough France;

<sup>1</sup>at the ale-house.      <sup>2</sup>a pair of dice.

<sup>3</sup>Many coins were marked with a cross.

<sup>4</sup>to the brothel.

<sup>5</sup>my sweetheart.

<sup>6</sup>easily won favours(?).

<sup>7</sup>Bordeaux.

Who rideth on her, he needeth not to care,  
 For she is trusséd for to break a lance:  
 It is a curtal that well can winch and prance.  
 To her will I now all my poverty allege,  
 And, till I come, have here my hat in pledge."

## DREDE

Gone is this knave, this ribald foul and lewd.  
 He ran as fast as ever that he might.  
 Unthriftiness in him may well be shewed,  
 For whom Tyburn groaneth both day and night.  
 And, as I stood and cast aside my sight,  
 Disdain I saw with Dissimulation  
 Standing in sad<sup>1</sup> communication.

But there was pointing and nodding with the head,  
 And many wordès said in secret wise;  
 They wandered aye, and stood still in no stead:  
 Methought alway Dissimuler did devise.  
 Me passing sore mine heart then 'gan agrise,<sup>2</sup>  
 I deemed and dread their talking was not good.  
 Anon Dissimuler came where I stood.

Then in his hood I saw there faces twain:  
 That one was lean and like a pinéd ghost,  
 That other looked as he would me have slain;  
 And to meward as he 'gan for to coast,  
 When that he was even at me almost,  
 I saw a knife hid in his one sleeve,  
 Whereon was written this word, *Mischief*.

And in his other sleeve, methought, I saw  
 A spoon of gold, full of honey sweet,  
 To feed a fool, and for to prove a daw<sup>3</sup>;  
 And on that sleeve these wordès were writ,  
*A false abstract cometh from a false concrete.*

<sup>1</sup>earnest.<sup>2</sup>shudder.<sup>3</sup>to try a simpleton.

His hood was long, his cope<sup>1</sup> was russet gray:  
These were the words that he to me did say.

## DISSIMULATION

"How do ye, maister? ye look so soberly!  
As I be savéd at the dreadful day,  
It is a perilous vice, this envý.  
Alas, a conning man he dwell may  
In no place well, but fools with him fray.  
But as for that, conning hath no foe  
Save him that nought can,<sup>2</sup> Scripture saith so.

"I know your virtue and your literature  
By that little conning that I have:  
Ye be maligned sore, I you ensure,  
But ye have craft yourself alway to save.  
It is great scorn to see a misproud knave  
With a clerkè<sup>3</sup> than conning is to prate:  
Let them go lose them, in the devil's date!

"For albeit that this 'long not to me,  
Yet on my back I bear such lewd dealing:  
Right now I spake with one, I trow, I see –  
But what – a straw! I may not tell all thing!  
By God, I say there is great heart-burning  
Between the persón ye wot of and you.  
Alas, I could not deal so with a Jew!

"I would each man were as plain as I!  
It is a world,<sup>4</sup> I say, to hear of some:  
I hate this feigning! fie upon it, fie!  
A man cannot wot where to be come:  
Ywis I could tell – but humerly, hum!  
I dafe not speak, we be so laid in wait,  
For all our court is full of deceit.

<sup>1</sup>cape.    <sup>2</sup>knows nothing.    <sup>3</sup>scholar.    <sup>4</sup>It is a wonder.

"Now by Saint Francis, that holy man and frere,<sup>1</sup>

I hate these ways against you that they take!

Were I as you, I would ride them full near,

And, by my troth, but if an end they make,

Yet will I say some wordes for your sake

That shall them anger, I hold thereon a groat:

For some shall ween be hanged by the throat!<sup>2</sup>

"I have a stopping oyster<sup>3</sup> in my poke,

Trust me, an if it come to a need!

But I am loath for to raise a smoke

If ye could be otherwise agreed.

And so I would it were, so God me speed,

For this may breed to a confusion

Without God make a good conclusion.

Nay, see where yonder standeth t'other man!

A flattering knave and false he is, God wot;

The drevil standeth to harken, an he can.

It were more thrift he bought him a new coat;

It will not be, his purse is not on float<sup>4</sup>:

All that he weareth it is borrowed ware,

His wit is thin, his hood is threadebare.

"More could I say, but what this is enow<sup>5</sup>:

Adew till soon, we shall speak more of this.

Ye must be ruled as I shall tell you how;

Amends maybe of that is now amiss.

And I am yours, sir, so have I bliss,

In every point that I can do or say:

Give me your hand, farewell, and have good-day!"

<sup>1</sup>friar.

<sup>2</sup>think themselves hanged.

<sup>3</sup>that which will stop their mouths.

<sup>4</sup>floating, full

<sup>5</sup>but that this is enough.

## DREDE

Suddenly, as he departed me fro,  
 Came pressing in one in a wonder array.  
 Ere I was ware, behind me he said, "BO!"  
 Then I, astonéd<sup>1</sup> of that sudden fray,  
 Start all at once, I liked nothing his play:  
 For, if I had not quickly fled the touch,  
 He had plucked out the nobles of my pouch.

He was trusséd in a garment strait:  
 I have not seen such another page,  
 For he could well upon a casket wait;  
 His hood all pouncéd<sup>2</sup> and garded like a cage;  
 Light lime-finger! he took none other wage.  
 "Harken," quod he, "lo here mine hand in thine!  
 To us welcome thou art, by Saint Quintine.

## DECEIT

"But, by that Lord that is one, two, and three,  
 I have an errand to round<sup>3</sup> in your ear . . .  
 He told me so, by God, ye may trust me,  
 Parde, remember when ye were there,  
 For I winked on you – wot ye not where?  
 In *A loco*, I mean *juxta B*:  
 Who is him that is blind and may not see!

"But to hear the subtilty and the craft,  
 As I shall tell you, if ye will hark again . . . !  
 And when I saw the whoresons would you haft,<sup>4</sup>  
 To hold mine hand, by God, I had great pain:  
 For forthwith there I had him slain,  
 But<sup>5</sup> that I dread murder would come out:  
 Who dealeth with shrews<sup>6</sup> hath need to look about!"

<sup>1</sup>astonished. <sup>2</sup>perforated. <sup>3</sup>whisper. <sup>4</sup>trick you. <sup>5</sup>rascals.

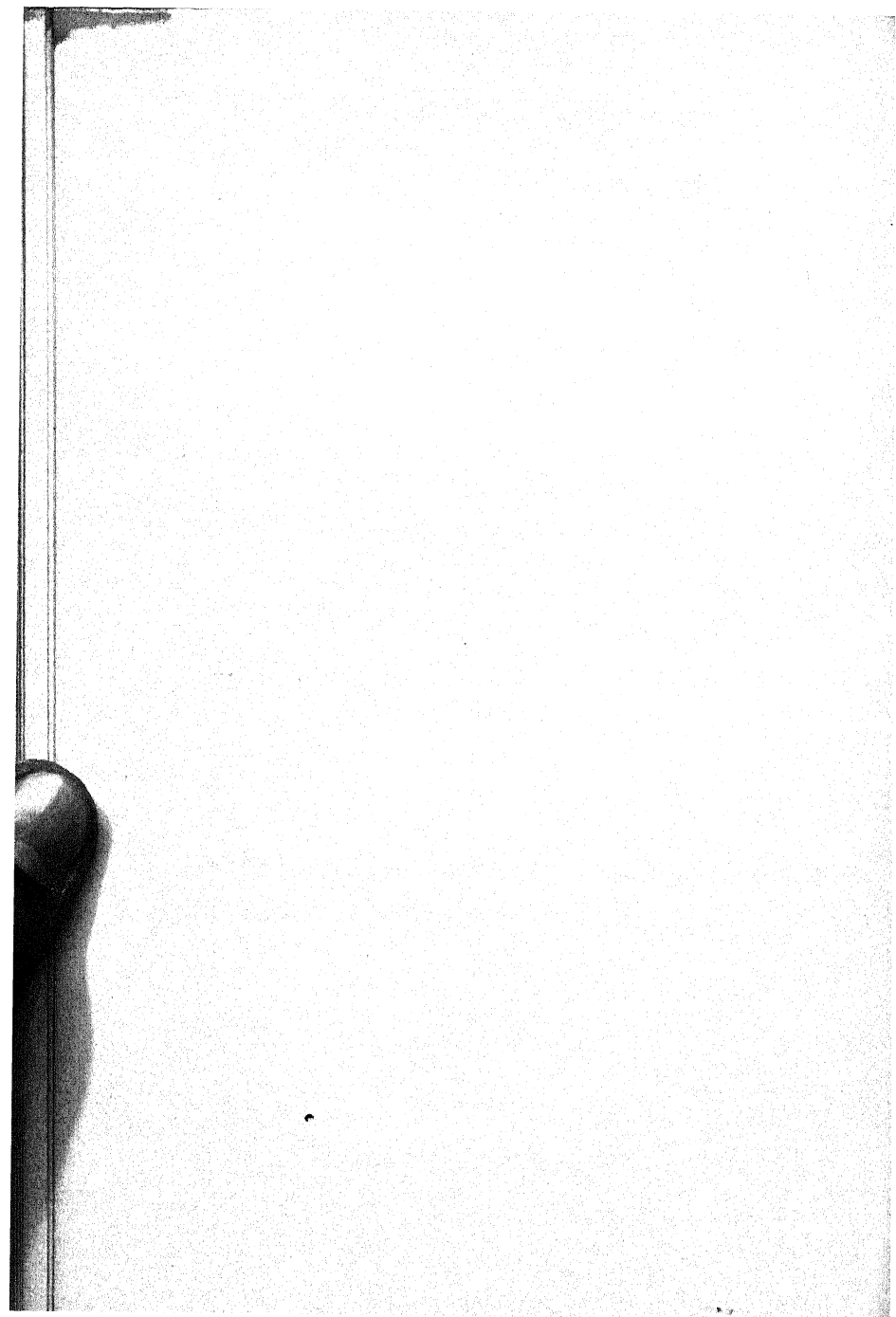
## DREDE

And as he rounded thus in mine ear  
Of false collusion confetteréd by assent,  
Methought I see lewd fellows here and there  
Come for to slay me of mortall intent.  
And, as they came, the shipboard fast I hent,<sup>1</sup>  
And thought to leap, and even with that woke,  
Caught pen and ink, and wrote this little book.

I would therewith no man were miscontent,  
Beseeching you that shall it see or read  
In every point to be indifferent,  
Sith all in substance of slumbering doth proceed.  
I will not say it is mattér indeed,  
But yet oftime such dreams be foundè true:  
Now construe ye what is the residue!

*Thus endeth the Bouge of Court.*

<sup>1</sup>seized.





*Hereafter followeth the Book of*

PHILIP SPARROW

*Compiled by MASTER SKELTON, Poet Laureate*

*Pla ce bo!*<sup>1</sup>

Who is there, who?

*Di le xi!*<sup>2</sup>

Dame Margery.

*Fa, re, my, my.*

Wherefore and why, why?

For the soul of Philip Sparrow,

That was, late, slain at Carrow,<sup>3</sup>

Among the Nuns Black.<sup>4</sup>

For that sweet soul's sake,

And for all sparrows' souls

Set in our bead-rolls,

*Pater noster qui,*

With an *Ave Mari,*

And with the corner of a Creed;

The more shall be your meed!

When I remember again

How my Philip was slain,

Never half the pain

Was between you twain,

Pyramus and Thisbe,

As then befell to me:

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the Office for the Dead at Vespers: "I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living" (Ps. cxvi. 9).

<sup>2</sup>Ps. cxiv. (Vulgate): "Praise ye [the Lord]."

<sup>3</sup>A nunnery in the suburbs of Norwich, where Joanna was being educated.

<sup>4</sup>Benedictines.

## PHILIP SPARROW

I wept and I wailed,  
 The tearès down hailed,  
 But nothing it availed  
 To call Philip again,  
 Whom Gib, our cat, hath slain.

Gib, I say, our cat  
 Worrowéd<sup>1</sup> her on that  
 Which I loved best.  
 It cannot be exprest  
 My sorrowful heaviness,  
 But all without redress!  
 For within that stound,<sup>2</sup>  
 Half slumb'ring in a sound<sup>3</sup>  
 I fell down to the ground.

Unneth<sup>4</sup> I cast mine eyes  
 Toward the cloudy skies !  
 But when I did behold  
 My sparrow dead and cold  
 No creature but that wold  
 Have ruéd upon me,  
 To behold and see  
 What heaviness did me pang:  
 Wherewith my hands I wrang,  
 That my sinews cracked,  
 As though I had been racked,  
 So pained and so strained  
 That no life wellnigh remained.

I sighed and I sobbed,  
 For that I was robbed  
 Of my sparrow's life.  
 O maiden, widow, and wife,  
 Of what estate<sup>5</sup> ye be,  
 Of high or low degree,

<sup>1</sup>Choked.<sup>2</sup>moment.<sup>3</sup>swoon.<sup>4</sup>With difficulty.<sup>5</sup>rank.

Great sorrow then ye might see,  
And learn to weep at me!  
Such pains did me frete  
That mine heart did beat,  
My visage pale and dead,  
Wan, and blue as lead!  
The pangs of hateful death  
Wellnigh had stopped my breath!

*Heu, heu, me,*<sup>1</sup>  
That I am woe for thee!  
*Ad Dominum, cum tribularer, clamavi*<sup>2</sup>:  
Of God nothing else crave I  
But Philip's soul to keep  
From the mares deep  
Of Acheronte's well,  
That is a flood of hell;  
And from the great Pluto,  
The prince of endless woe;  
And from foul Alecto,  
With visage black and blo<sup>3</sup>;  
And from Medusa, that mare,<sup>4</sup>  
That like a fiend doth stare;  
And from Megæra's adders  
For ruffling of Philip's feathers,  
And from her fiery sparklings  
For burning of his wings;  
And from the smokèd sour  
Of Proserpina's bower;  
And from the dens dark  
Where Cerebus doth bark,  
Whom Theseus did affray,  
Whom Hercules did outray,  
As famous poets say;  
From that hell-hound

<sup>1</sup>Woe, woe is me.    <sup>2</sup>"In my distress, I cried unto the Lord."

<sup>3</sup>livid.

<sup>4</sup>hag.

## PHILIP SPARROW

That lieth in chainès bound,  
 With ghastly headès three;  
 To Jupiter pray we  
 That Philip preserved may be!  
 Amen, say ye with me!

*Do mi nus,*  
 Help now, sweet Jesus!  
*Leuavi oculos meos in montes.*<sup>1</sup>  
 Would God I had Zenophontes,  
 Or Socrates the wise,  
 To shew me their device  
 Moderately to take  
 This sorrow that I make  
 For Philip Sparrow's sake!  
 So fervently I shake,  
 I feel my body quake!  
 So urgently I am brought  
 Into careful thought!  
 Like Andromach, Hector's wife,  
 Was weary of her life,  
 When she had lost her joy,  
 Noble Hector of Troy;  
 In like manner also  
 Increaseth my deadly woe,  
 For my sparrow is go!

It was so pretty a fool,  
 It would sit on a stool,  
 And learned after my school  
 For to keep his cut,<sup>2</sup>  
 With "Philip, keep your cut!"

It had a velvet cap,  
 And would sit upon my lap,  
 And seek after small wormès,

<sup>1</sup>"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills" (Ps. cxxi. 1, Vulgate).

<sup>2</sup>keep his distance.

And sometime whitebread-crumbès;  
And, many times and oft,  
Between my breastès soft  
It wouldè lie and rest;  
It was proper and prest<sup>1</sup>!

Sometime he would gasp  
When he saw a wasp;  
A fly, or a gnat,  
He would fly at that;  
And prettily he would pant  
When he saw an ant!  
Lord, how he would pry  
After a butterfly!  
Lord, how he would hop  
After the gressop!  
And when I said, "Phip, Phip!"  
Then he would leap and skip,  
And take me by the lip.  
Alas, it will me slo  
That Philip is gone me fro!

*Si in i qui ta tes . . .*<sup>2</sup>  
Alas, I was evil at ease!  
*De pro fun dis cla ma vi,*<sup>3</sup>  
When I saw my sparrow die!

Now, after my dome,<sup>4</sup>  
Dame Sulpicia at Rome,  
Whose name regist' red was  
For ever in tables of brass,  
Because she did pass  
In poesy to indite  
And eloquently to write,

<sup>1</sup>pretty and neat.

<sup>2</sup>"If [thou shouldest mark] iniquities . . ." (Ps. cxxx. 3).

<sup>3</sup>"Out of the depths I cried [unto the Lord]" (Ps. cxxx.).

<sup>4</sup>opinion.

## PHILIP SPARROW

Though she would pretend  
 My sparrow to commend,  
 I trow, she could not amend  
 Reporting the virtues all  
 Of my sparrow royall.

For it would come and go,  
 And fly so to and fro;  
 And on me it would leap  
 When I was asleep  
 And his feathers shake,  
 Wherewith he would make  
 Me often for to wake,  
 And for to take him in  
 Upon my naked skin.  
 God wot, we thought no sin:  
 What though he crept so low?  
 It was no hurt, I trow,  
 He did nothing, perde,  
 But sit upon my knee!  
 Philip, though he were nice,<sup>1</sup>  
 In him it was no vice!  
 Philip might be bold  
 And do what he wold:  
 Philip would seek and take  
 All the fleas black  
 That he could there espy  
 With his wanton eye.

*O pe ra.*<sup>2</sup>

La, soll, fa, fa,

*Confitebor tibi, Domine, in toto corde meo!*<sup>3</sup>

Alas, I would rise and go

A thousand mile of ground!

<sup>1</sup>wanton, toyish.

<sup>2</sup>"The works [of the Lord are great]" (Ps. cxi. 2).

<sup>3</sup>"I will confess to the Lord with my whole heart" (Ps. cxi. 1).

If any such might be found  
It were worth an hundred pound  
Of King Cræsus' gold,  
Or of Attalus the old,  
The riché prince of Pergame,  
Whoso list the story to see.  
Cadmus, that his sister sought,  
An he should be bought  
For gold and fee,  
He should over the sea  
To weet if he could bring  
Any of the offspring,  
Or any of the blood.  
But whoso understood  
Of Medea's art,  
I would I had a part  
Of her crafty magic!  
My sparrow then should be quick,  
With a charm or twain,  
And play with me again!  
But all this is in vain  
Thus for to complain.

I took my sampler once  
Of purpose, for the nonce,  
To sew with stitches of silk  
My sparrow white as milk,  
That by representation  
Of his image and fashion  
To me it might import  
Some pleasure and comfort,  
For my solace and sport.  
But when I was sewing his beak,  
Methought my sparrow did speak,  
And opened his pretty bill,  
Saying, "Maid, ye are in will  
Again me for to kill!  
Ye prick me in the head!"

With that my needle waxéd red,  
 Methought, of Philip's blood.  
 Mine hair right upstood,  
 I was in such a fray  
 My speech was taken away.  
 I cast down that there was,  
 And said, "Alas, alas,  
 How cometh this to pass?"  
 My fingers, dead and cold,  
 Could not my sampler hold:  
 My needle and thread  
 I threw away for dread.  
 The best now that I may  
 Is for his soul to pray:  
*A porta inferi . . .*<sup>1</sup>  
 Good Lord, have mercy  
 Upon my sparrow's soul,  
 Written in my bead-roll!

*Au di vi vo cem,*<sup>2</sup>  
 Japhet, Ham, and Shem,  
*Ma gni fi cat,*  
 Shew me the right path  
 To the hills of Armony!  
 Whereon the boards yet lie  
 Of your father's boat,  
 That was sometime afloat;  
 And now they lie and rote;  
 Let some poets write  
 Deucalion's flood it hight.  
 But as verily as ye be  
 The natural sons three  
 Of Noah the patriarch,  
 That made that great ark,

<sup>1</sup>"From the gate of hell" - an antiphon in the Mass for the Dead.

<sup>2</sup>Another antiphon: "I heard a voice [from heaven say unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead]" (Rev. xiv. 13).



Wherein he had apes and owls,  
Beasts, birds, and fowls,  
That if ye can find  
Any of my sparrow's kind  
(God send the soul good rest!)  
I would have yet a nest  
As pretty and as prest  
As my sparrow was.  
But my sparrow did pass  
All sparrows of the wood  
That were since Noah's flood!  
Was never none so good!  
King Philip of Macedony  
Had no such Philip as I,  
No, no, sir, hardly!

Vengeance I ask and cry,  
By way of exclamation,  
On all the whole nation  
Of cattés wild and tame:  
God send them sorrow and shame!  
That cat specially  
That slew so cruelly  
My little pretty sparrow  
That I brought up at Carrow!

O cat of churlish kind,<sup>1</sup>  
The fiend was in thy mind  
When thou my bird untwined<sup>2</sup>!  
I would thou hadst been blind!  
The léopards savage,  
The lions in their rage  
Might catch thee in their paws,  
And gnaw thee in their jaws!  
The serpents of Libany  
Might sting thee venomously!  
The dragons with their tongues

<sup>1</sup>nature.<sup>2</sup>destroyed.

Might poison thy liver and lungs!  
 The manticors<sup>1</sup> of the mountains  
 Might feed them on thy brains!

Melanchætes, that hound  
 That plucked Acteon to the ground,  
 Gave him his mortal wound,  
 Changed to a deer,  
 The story doth appear,  
 Was changéd to an hart:  
 So (foul cat that thou art!)  
 The selfsame hound  
 Might thee confound  
 That his own lord bote,  
 Might bite asunder thy throat!

Of Inde the greedy grypes<sup>2</sup>  
 Might tear out all thy tripes!  
 Of Arcady the bears  
 Might pluck away thine ears!  
 The wild wolf Lycaon<sup>3</sup>  
 Bite asunder thy back bone!  
 Of Etna the burning hill,  
 That day and night burneth still,  
 Set in thy tail a blaze  
 That all the world may gaze  
 And wonder upon thee,  
 From Ocean the great sea  
 Unto the Isles of Orcady,<sup>4</sup>  
 From Tilbury ferry  
 To the plain of Salisbury!  
 So traitorously my bird to kill  
 That never owed thee evil will!

Was never bird in cage  
 More gentle of corage<sup>5</sup>

human-headed dragons.    <sup>2</sup>griffins.    <sup>3</sup>cf. Ovid, *Met.* i. 163.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. the Orkneys.

<sup>5</sup>inclination.

In doing his homage  
 Unto his sovereign.  
 Alas, I say again,  
 Death hath departed us twain!  
 The false cat hath thee slain:  
 Farewell, Philip, adew!  
 Our Lord, thy soul rescue!  
 Farewell, without restore,  
 Farewell, for evermore!

An it were a Jew,  
 It would make one rue,  
 To see my sorrow new.  
 These villainous false cats  
 Were made for mice and rats,  
 And not for birdès small.  
 Alas, my face waxeth pale,  
 Telling this piteous tale,  
 How my bird so fair,  
 That was wont to repair,  
 And go in at my spair,<sup>1</sup>  
 And creep in at my gore<sup>1</sup>  
 Of my gown before,  
 Flickering with his wings!  
 Alas, my heart it stings,  
 Rememb'ring pretty things!  
 Alas, mine heart it sleth  
 My Philip's doleful death!  
 When I remember it,  
 How prettily it would sit,  
 Many times and oft,  
 Upon my finger aloft!  
 I played with him tittle-tattle,  
 And fed him with my spattle,<sup>2</sup>  
 With his bill between my lips.  
 It was my pretty Phips!

<sup>1</sup>Openings in her clothes.

<sup>2</sup>spittle.

## PHILIP SPARROW

Many a pretty kuss<sup>1</sup>  
 Had I of his sweet muss<sup>2</sup>!  
 And now the cause is thus,  
 That he is slain me fro,  
 To my great pain and woe.

Of fortune this the chance  
 Standeth on variánce:  
 Oft time after pleasánce,  
 Trouble and grievánce.  
 No man can be sure  
 Always to have pleasure:  
 As well perceive ye may  
 How my disport and play  
 From me was taken away  
 By Gib, our cat saváge,  
 That in a furious rage  
 Caught Philip by the head  
 And slew him there stark dead!

*Kyrie, eleison,  
 Christe, eleison,  
 Kyrie, eleison!*<sup>3</sup>

For Philip Sparrow's soul,  
 Set in our bead-roll,  
 Let us now whisper  
 A *Pater noster*.

*Lauda, anima mea, Dominum!*<sup>4</sup>

To weep with me, look that ye come,  
 All manner of birdés in your kind;  
 See none be left behind.  
 To mourning look that ye fall  
 With dolorous songs funerall,  
 Some to sing, and some to say,

<sup>1</sup>kiss.

<sup>2</sup>bill.

<sup>3</sup>"Lord, have mercy," etc.

<sup>4</sup>"Praise the Lord, O my soul!" (Ps. cxlvi. 1, Vulgate).

Some to weep, and some to pray,  
 Every bird in his lay.  
 The goldfinch, the wagtail;  
 The jangling jay to rail,  
 The fleckéd pie to chatter  
 Of this dolorous matter;  
 And robin redbreast,  
 He shall be the priest  
 The requiem mass to sing,  
 Softly warbeling,  
 With help of the reed sparrow,  
 And the chattering swallow,  
 This hearse for to hallow;  
 The lark with his long toe;  
 The spinke,<sup>1</sup> and the martinet also;  
 The shoveller with his broad beak;  
 The dotterel, that foolish peke,  
 And also the mad coot,  
 With bald face to toot;  
 The fieldfare, and the snite<sup>2</sup>;  
 The crow, and the kite;  
 The raven, called Rolfé,  
 His plain song to sol-fa;  
 The partridge, the quail;  
 The plover with us to wail;  
 The woodhack,<sup>3</sup> that singeth "chur"  
 Hoarsely, as he had the mur<sup>4</sup>;  
 The lusty chanting nightingale;  
 The popinjay<sup>5</sup> to tell her tale,  
 That toteth<sup>6</sup> oft in a glass,  
 Shall read the Gospel at mass;  
 The mavis<sup>7</sup> with her whistle  
 Shall read there the Epistle.  
 But with a large and a long  
 To keep just plain-song,

<sup>1</sup>chaffinch.    <sup>2</sup>snipe.    <sup>3</sup>woodpecker.    <sup>4</sup>a cold.

<sup>5</sup>parrot.    <sup>6</sup>peeps.    <sup>7</sup>song-thrush.

## PHILIP SPARROW

Our chanters shall be the cuckoo,  
 The culver, the stockdoo,  
 With " peewit " the lapwing,  
 The Versicles shall sing.

The bittern with his bumpè,  
 The crane with his trumpè,  
 The swan of Mæander,  
 The goose and the gander,  
 The duck and the drake,  
 Shall watch at this wake;  
 The peacock so proud,  
 Because his voice is loud,  
 And hath a glorious tail,  
 He shall sing the Grail<sup>1</sup>;  
 The owl, that is so foul,  
 Must help us to howl;  
 The heron so gaunt,  
 And the cormorant,  
 With the pheasant,  
 And the gagging gant,<sup>2</sup>  
 And the churlish chough;  
 The knot and the ruff;  
 The barnacle,<sup>3</sup> the buzzard,  
 With the wild mallard;  
 The divendop to sleep;  
 The water-hen to weep;  
 The puffin and the teal  
 Money they shall deal  
 To poorè folk at large,  
 That shall be their charge;  
 The seamew and the titmouse;  
 The woodcock with the long nose;  
 The throstle with her warbling;  
 The starling with her brabbling;  
 The rook, with the osprey

<sup>1</sup>the *Graduale*.<sup>2</sup>gannet.<sup>3</sup>the barnacle-goose.

That putteth fishes to a fray;  
And the dainty curlew,  
With the turtle most true.

At this *Placebo*  
We may not well forgo  
The countering of the coe<sup>1</sup>;  
The stork also,  
That maketh his nest  
In chimneys to rest;  
Within those walls  
No broken galls  
May there abide  
Of cuckoldry side,  
Or else philosophy  
Maketh a great lie.

The ostrich, that will eat  
An horseshoe so great,  
In the stead of meat,  
Such fervent heat  
His stomach doth freat;  
He cannot well fly,  
Nor sing tunably,  
Yet at a brayd<sup>2</sup>  
He hath well assayed  
To sol-fa above ela.  
Fa, lorell, fa, fa!

*Ne quando*

*Male cantando,*<sup>3</sup>

The best that we can,  
To make him our bell-man,  
And let him ring the bells.  
He can do nothing else.

Chanticleer, our cock,  
Must tell what is of the clock

<sup>1</sup>jackdaw.

<sup>2</sup>at a push.

<sup>3</sup>Lest ever by singing badly.

## PHILIP SPARROW

By the astrology  
 That he hath naturally  
 Conceived and caught,  
 And was never taught  
 By Albumazer<sup>1</sup>  
 The astronomer,  
 Nor by Ptolomy  
 Prince of astronomy,<sup>2</sup>  
 Nor yet by Haly;  
 And yet he croweth daily  
 And nightly the tides  
 That no man abides,  
 With Partlot his hen,  
 Whom now and then  
 He plucketh by the head  
 When he doth her tread.

The bird of Araby,  
 That potentially  
 May never die,  
 And yet there is none  
 But one alone;  
 A phoenix it is  
 This hearse that must bliss  
 With aromatic gums  
 That cost great sums,  
 The way of thurification  
 To make a fumigation,  
 Sweet of reflare,<sup>3</sup>  
 And redolent of air,  
 This corse for to 'sense  
 With great reverence,  
 As patriarch or pope  
 In a black cope.  
 Whiles he 'senseth the hearse,  
 He shall sing the verse,

<sup>1</sup>An Arabian of the ninth century.    <sup>2</sup>i.e. astrology.    <sup>3</sup>perfume.



*Libera me,*<sup>1</sup>

In de la, sol, re,

Softly bemole<sup>2</sup>

For my sparrow's soul.

Pliny sheweth all

In his *Story Natural*<sup>3</sup>

What he doth find

Of the phoenix kind;

Of whose incineration

There riseth a new creation

Of the same fashion

Without alteration,

Saving that old age

Is turned into corage

Of fresh youth again;

This matter true and plain,

Plain matter indeed,

Who so list to read.

But for the eagle doth fly

Highest in the sky,

He shall be the sub-dean,

The choir to demean,<sup>4</sup>

As provost principal,

To teach them their Ordinal;

Also the noble falcon,

With the ger-falcon,

The tarsel gentill,

They shall mourn soft and still

In their amice of gray;

The sacre<sup>5</sup> with them shall say

*Dirige*<sup>6</sup> for Philip's soul;

The goshawk shall have a roll

The choristers to control;

<sup>1</sup>"Deliver me" – the opening of the Responsory.

<sup>2</sup>B molle, flat.

<sup>3</sup>See *Historia Naturalis*, lib. x., sec. 2.

<sup>4</sup>conduct. <sup>5</sup>A hawk. <sup>6</sup>"Direct [my steps]" – another antiphon.

## PHILIP SPARROW

The lanners and the merlions<sup>1</sup>  
 Shall stand in their mourning-gowns;  
 The hobby and the musket<sup>2</sup>  
 The censers and the cross shall fet;  
 The kestrel in all this wark  
 Shall be holy water clerk.

And now the dark cloudy night  
 Chaseth away Phoebus bright,  
 Taking his course toward the west,  
 God send my sparrow's soul good rest!  
*Requiem aeternum dona eis, Domine!*<sup>3</sup>  
 Fa, fa, fa, mi, re, re,  
*A por ta in fe ri,*<sup>4</sup>  
 Fa, fa, fa, mi, mi.

*Credo videre bona Domini,*<sup>5</sup>  
 I pray God, Philip to heaven may fly!  
*Domine, exaudi orationem meam!*<sup>6</sup>  
 To heaven he shall, from heaven he came!  
*Do mi nus vo bis cum!*<sup>7</sup>

Of all good prayers God send him some!  
*Oremus,*<sup>8</sup>

*Deus, cui proprium est misereri et parcere,*<sup>9</sup>  
 On Philip's soul have pity!  
 For he was a pretty cock,  
 And came of a gentle stock,  
 And wrapt in a maiden's smock,  
 And cherished full daintily,  
 Till cruel fate made him to die:  
 Alas, for doleful destiny!

<sup>1</sup>little hawks.

<sup>2</sup>the male sparrow-hawk.

<sup>3</sup>"Grant them eternal rest, O Lord!"

<sup>4</sup>"From the gate of hell."

<sup>5</sup>"I believe to see the goodness of the Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 13).

<sup>6</sup>"Lord, hear my prayer!" (Ps. cii.).

<sup>7</sup>"The Lord be with you!"

<sup>8</sup>"Let us pray."

<sup>9</sup>"O God, whose property it is to be merciful and to spare."

But whereto should I  
 Longer mourn or cry?  
 To Jupiter I call,  
 Of heaven imperial,  
 That Philip may fly  
 Above the starry sky,  
 To tread the pretty wren,  
 That is our Lady's hen:  
 Amen, amen, amen!

Yet one thing is behind,  
 That now cometh to mind;  
 An epitaph I would have  
 For Philip's grave:  
 But for I am a maid,  
 Timorous, half afraid,  
 That never yet assayed  
 Of Helicones well,  
 Where the Muses dwell;  
 Though I can read and spell,  
 Recount, report, and tell  
 Of the *Tales of Canterbury*,  
 Some sad stories, some merry;  
 As Palamon and Arcet,  
 Duke Theseus, and Partlet;  
 And the Wife of Bath,  
 That worketh much scath'<sup>1</sup>  
 When her tale is told  
 Among housewives bold,  
 How she controlled  
 Her husbands as she wold,  
 And them to despise  
 In the homeliest wise,  
 Bring other wives in thought  
 Their husbands to set at nought.  
 And though that read have I

<sup>1</sup>trouble.

## PHILIP SPARROW

Of Gawain and Sir Guy,  
 And tell can a great piece  
 Of the *Golden Fleece*,  
 How Jason it wan,  
 Like a valiant man;  
 Of Arthur's Round Table,  
 With his knights commendable,  
 And Dame Gaynor, his queen,  
 Was somewhat wanton, I ween;  
 How Sir Lancelot de Lake  
 Many a spear brake  
 For his lady's sake;  
 Of Tristram, and King Mark,  
 And all the whole wark  
 Of Belle Isolde his wife,  
 For whom was much strife;  
 Some say she was light,  
 And made her husband knight  
 Of the common hall,  
 That cuckolds men call;  
 And of Sir Lybius,  
 Named Dysconius<sup>1</sup>;  
 Of Quater Fylz Amund,<sup>2</sup>  
 And how they were summoned  
 To Rome, to Charlemagne,  
 Upon a great pain,  
 And how they rode each one  
 On Bayard Mountalbon;  
 Men see him now and then  
 In the forest of Arden.  
 What though I can frame  
 The stories by name  
 Of Judas Maccabeus,  
 And of Cæsar Julius;  
 • And of the love between

<sup>1</sup>Le Beau Desconnu in Ritson's *Met. Rom.* ii.

<sup>2</sup>The Four Sons of Aymon (Caxton).

Paris and Vienne<sup>1</sup>;  
 And of the duke<sup>2</sup> Hannibal,  
 That made the Romans all  
 Fordread and to quake;  
 How Scipion did wake  
 The city of Carthage,  
 Which by his unmerciful rage  
 He beat down to the ground.  
 And though I can expound  
 Of Hector of Troy,<sup>3</sup>  
 That was all their joy,  
 Whom Achilles slew,  
 Wherefore all Troy did rue;  
 And of the love so hote  
 That made Troilus to dote  
 Upon fair Cresseid;  
 And what they wrote and said,  
 And of their wanton wills  
 Pander bare the bills<sup>4</sup>  
 From one to the other;  
 His master's love to further,  
 Sometime a precious thing,  
 An ouch,<sup>5</sup> or else a ring;  
 From her to him again  
 Sometime a pretty chain,  
 Or a bracelet of her hair,  
 Pray'd Troilus for to wear  
 That token for her sake;  
 How heartily he did it take,  
 And much thereof did make;  
 And all that was in vain,  
 For she did but feign;  
 The story telleth plain,  
 He could not optain,  
 Though his father were a king,

<sup>1</sup>Printed by Caxton. <sup>2</sup>leader. <sup>3</sup>As in Lydgate's *Book of Troy*.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. *billets-doux*.

<sup>5</sup>A jewel or brooch.

Yet there was a thing  
 That made the male to wring<sup>1</sup>;  
 She made him to sing  
 The song of lover's lay;  
 Musing night and day,  
 Mourning all alone,  
 Comfort had he none,  
 For she was quite gone.  
 Thus in conclusion,  
 She brought him in abusion;  
 In earnest and in game  
 She was much to blame;  
 Disparaged is her fame,  
 And blemished is her name,  
 In manner half with shame;  
 Troilus also hath lost  
 On her much love and cost,  
 And now must kiss the post;  
 Pandarus, that went between,  
 Hath won nothing, I ween,  
 But light for summer green;  
 Yet for a special laud  
 He is named 'Troilus' bawd;  
 Of that name he is sure  
 Whiles the world shall 'dure.

Though I remember the fable  
 Of Penelope most stable,  
 To her husband most true,  
 Yet long-time she ne knew  
 Whether he were live or dead;  
 Her wit stood her in stead,  
 That she was true and just  
 For any bodily lust  
 To Ulysses her make,<sup>2</sup>  
 And never would him forsake:

<sup>1</sup>i.e. wrung his withers.

<sup>2</sup>mate.

Of Marcus Marcellus<sup>1</sup>  
A process I could tell us;  
And of Antiochus;  
And of Josephus  
*De Antiquitatibus*;  
And of Mardocheus,<sup>2</sup>  
And of great Ahasuerus,  
And of Vesca his queen,  
Whom he forsook with teen,  
And of Esther his other wife,  
With whom he led a pleasant life;  
Of King Alexander;  
And of King Evander;  
And of Porsenna the great,  
That made the Romans to sweat:

Though I have enroll'd  
A thousand new and old  
Of these historious tales,  
To fill budgets and males<sup>3</sup>  
With books that I have read,  
Yet I am nothing sped,<sup>4</sup>  
And can but little skill  
Of Ovid or Virgil,  
Or of Plutarch,  
Or Francis Petrarch,  
Alcæus or Sappho,  
Or such others poets mo,  
As Linus and Homerus,  
Euphorion and Theocritus,  
Anacreon and Arion,  
Sophocles and Philemon,  
Pindarus and Dimonides,  
Philistion and Pherecydes;

<sup>1</sup>M. Claudius Marcellus, conqueror of Syracuse in the Second Punic War, and slain by Hannibal.

<sup>2</sup>Mordecai.

<sup>3</sup>bags.

<sup>4</sup>versed.

## PHILIP SPARROW

These poets of ancientè,  
They are too diffuse<sup>1</sup> for me:

For, as I tofore have said,  
I am but a young maid,  
And cannot in effect  
My style as yet direct  
With English words elect.  
Our natural tongue is rude,  
And hard to be ennewed  
With polished termès lusty;  
Our language is so rusty,  
So cankered, and so full  
Of frowards, and so dull,  
That if I would apply  
To write ornately,  
I wot not where to find  
Terms to serve my mind.

Gower's English is old,  
And of no value told;  
His matter is worth gold,  
And worthy to be enroll'd.

In Chaucer I am sped,  
His *Tales* I have read:  
His matter is delectable,  
Solacious,<sup>2</sup> and commendable;  
His English well allowed,  
So as it is enpowered,  
For as it is employed,  
There is no English void,  
At those days much commended.<sup>3</sup>  
And now men would have amended  
His English, whereat they bark,  
And mar all they wark.  
Chaucer, that famous clerk,

<sup>1</sup>difficult.<sup>2</sup>pleasant.<sup>3</sup>text seems corrupt here.



His terms were not dark,  
But pleasant, easy, and plain;  
No word he wrote in vain.

Also John Lydgate  
Writeth after an higher rate;  
It is diffuse to find  
The sentence of his mind,  
Yet writeth he in his kind,  
No man that can amend  
Those matters that he hath penned;  
Yet some men find a fault,  
And say he writeth too haut.

Wherefore hold me excused  
If I have not well perused  
Mine English half abused;  
Though it be refused,  
In worth I shall it take,  
And fewer wordès make.

But, for my sparrow's sake,  
Yet as a woman may,  
My wit I shall assay  
An epitaph to write  
In Latin plain and light,  
Whereof the elegy  
Followeth by and by:  
*Flos volucrum formose, vale!*  
*Philippe, sub isto*  
*Marmore jam recubas,*  
*Qui mihi carus eras.*  
*Semper erunt nitido*  
*Radiantia sidera coelo;*  
*Impressusque meo*  
*Pectore semper eris.*<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Lovely flower of a bird, farewell! Philip, beneath that marble  
now you lie, you who were dear to me. Ever in the bright sky will  
there be shining stars; and ever will you be engraven on my heart.

## PHILIP SPARROW

*Per me laurigerum  
 Britonum Skeltonida Vatem  
 Haec cecinisse licet  
 Ficta sub imagine texta.  
 Cujus eris volucris,  
 Praestanti corpore virgo:  
 Candida Nais erat,  
 Formosior ista Joanna est;  
 Docta Corinna fuit,  
 Sed magis ista sapit.<sup>1</sup>*

*Bien men souient.<sup>2</sup>*

## THE COMMENDATIONS

*Beati im ma cu la ti in via,<sup>3</sup>  
 O gloriosa foemina!<sup>4</sup>  
 Now mine whole imagination  
 And studious meditation  
 Is to take this commendation  
 In this consideration;  
 And under patient toleration  
 Of that most goodly maid  
 That *Placebo* hath said,  
 And for her sparrow prayed  
 In lamentable wise,  
 Now will I enterprise,  
 Through the grace divine  
 Of the Muses nine,  
 Her beauty to commend,  
 If Arethusa will send*

<sup>1</sup>Through me, Skelton, Poet of Britain, may this be sung under an assumed character, whose [i.e. my] bird thou shalt be; maiden of lovely form. Beautiful was Nais, lovelier is this Joanna, Corinna was learned, but she is wiser.

<sup>2</sup>I remember it well.

<sup>3</sup>"Blessed are the undefiled in the way" (Ps. cxix. 1).

<sup>4</sup>O glorious woman!

Me influence to indite,  
And with my pen to write;  
If Apollo will promise  
Melodiously to it devise  
His tunable harp strings  
With harmony that sings  
Of princes and of kings  
And of all pleasant things,  
Of lust and of delight,  
Thorough his godly might;  
To whom be the laud ascribed  
That my pen hath enbied  
With the aureate droppes,  
As verily my hope is,  
Of Tagus, that golden flood,  
That passeth all earthly good;  
And as that flood doth pass  
All floods that ever was  
With his golden sands,  
Who so that understands  
Cosmography, and the streams  
And the floods in strange reams,  
Right so she doth exceede  
All other of whom we read,  
Whose fame by me shall spread  
Into Persia and Mede,<sup>1</sup>  
From Britons' Albion  
To the Tower of Babylon.

I trust it is no shame,  
And no man will me blame,  
Though I register her name  
In the court of Fame;  
For this most goodly flower,  
This blossom of fresh colour,  
So Jupiter me succour,

<sup>1</sup>Media.

## PHILIP SPARROW

She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,<sup>1</sup>*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Retribue servo tuo, vivifica me!<sup>2</sup>*  
*Labia mea laudabunt te.<sup>3</sup>*

But enforced am I  
 Openly to ascry,  
 And to make an outcry  
 Against odious Envy,  
 That evermore will lie,  
 And say cursedly;  
 With his leathern eye,  
 And cheekes dry;  
 With visage wan,  
 As swart as tan;  
 His bones crake,  
 Lean as a rake;  
 His gummès rusty  
 Are full unlusty<sup>4</sup>;  
 His heart withall  
 Bitter as gall;  
 His liver, his lung  
 With anger is wrung;  
 His serpent's tongue  
 That many one hath stung;  
 He frowneth ever;  
 He laugheth never,  
 Even nor morrow,  
 But other men's sorrow  
 Causeth him to grin  
 And rejoyce therein;  
 No sleep can him catch,  
 But ever doth watch,

<sup>1</sup>With this twin brightness.

<sup>2</sup>"Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live."

<sup>3</sup>"My lips shall praise thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 3).      <sup>4</sup>unpleasant.

He is so bete<sup>1</sup>  
With malice, and frete<sup>2</sup>  
With anger and ire,  
His foul desire  
Will suffer no sleep  
In his head to creep;  
His foul semblant  
All displeasant;  
When others are glad,  
Then is he sad;  
Frantic and mad,  
His tongue never still  
For to say ill,  
Writhing and wringing,  
Biting and stinging;  
And thus this elf  
Consumeth himself,  
Himself doth slo  
With pain and woe!  
This false Envy  
Sayeth that I  
Use great folly  
For to indite,  
And for to write,  
And spend my time  
In prose and rime,  
For to express  
The nobleness  
Of my mistress,  
That causeth me  
Studious to be  
To make a relation  
Of her commendation.  
And there again  
Envy doth complain,  
And hath disdain;

<sup>1</sup>inflamed.<sup>2</sup>gnawed.

But yet certain  
 I will be plain,  
 And my style 'dress  
 To this process.

Now Phœbus me ken  
 To sharp my pen,  
 And lead my fist  
 As him best list,  
 That I may say  
 Honour alway  
 Of womankind!  
 Truth doth me bind  
 And loyalty  
 Ever to be  
 Their true bedell,<sup>1</sup>  
 To write and tell  
 How women excel  
 In nobleness;  
 As my mistress,  
 Of whom I think  
 With pen and ink  
 For to compile  
 Some goodly style;  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Legem pone mihi, domina, in viam justificationum*  
*tuarum!*<sup>2</sup>  
*Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>servitor, beadsman.

<sup>2</sup>"Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes!"

<sup>3</sup>"As the hart panteth after the water-brooks" (Ps. xlii.).

How shall I report  
 All the goodly sort  
 Of her features clear,  
 That hath none earthly peer?  
 The favour of her face  
 Ennewed all with grace,  
 Comfort, pleasure, and solace.  
 Mine heart doth so embrace,  
 And so hath ravished me  
 Her to behold and see,  
 That in wordès plain  
 I cannot me refrain  
 To look on her again:  
 Alas, what should I feign?  
 It were a pleasant pain  
 With her aye to remain.

Her eyen gray and steep  
 Causeth mine heart to leap;  
 With her brows bent  
 She may well represent  
 Fair Lucre, as I ween,  
 Or else fair Polixene,  
 Or else Calliope,  
 Or else Penelope:  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Memor esto verbi tui servo tuo!*<sup>1</sup>  
*Servus tuus sum ego.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Remember thy word unto thy servant!" (Ps. cxix. 49).

<sup>2</sup>"I am thy servant" (Ps. cxix. 125).

## PHILIP SPARROW

The Indy sapphire blue  
 Her veins doth ennew;  
 The orient pearl so clear,  
 The whiteness of her leer<sup>1</sup>;  
 Her lusty ruby ruddies<sup>2</sup>  
 Resemble the rose buddés;  
 Her lips soft and merry  
 Enblooméd like the cherry:  
 It were an heavenly bliss  
 Her sugar'd mouth to kiss.

Her beauty to augment,  
 Dame Nature hath her lent  
 A wart<sup>3</sup> upon her cheek, —  
 Who so list to seek  
 In her visage a scar, —  
 That seemeth from afar  
 Like to the radiant star,  
 All with favour fret,  
 So properly it is set!  
 She is the violet,  
 The daisy delectable,  
 The columbine commendable,  
 The jelofer amiable:  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Bonitatem fecisti cum servo tuo, domina,<sup>4</sup>*  
*Et ex prae cordiis sonant praeconia!<sup>5</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>complexion.<sup>2</sup>blushes.<sup>3</sup>mole (probably).<sup>4</sup>"Thou hast dealt bountifully with thy servant, Lord" (Ps. cxix.).<sup>5</sup>"And from the heart sound praises!"



And when I perceived  
 Her wart and conceived,  
 It cannot be deny'd  
 But it was well conveyed  
 And set so womanly,  
 And nothing wantonly,  
 But right conveniently,  
 And full congruently,  
 As Nature could devise,  
 In most goodly wise!  
 Who so list behold,  
 It maketh lovers bold  
 To her to sue for grace,  
 Her favour to purchase;  
 The scar upon her chin,  
 Enhached on her fair skin,  
 Whiter than the swan,  
 It would make any man  
 To forget deadly sin  
 Her favour to win!  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Defecit in salutatione tua anima mea;*<sup>1</sup>  
*Quid petis filio, mater dulcissima?*<sup>2</sup>

Soft, and make no din,  
 For now I will begin  
 To have in remembrance  
 Her goodly dalliance,  
 And her goodly pastance\*:

<sup>1</sup>"My soul fainteth after thy salvation" (Ps. cxix. 81).

<sup>2</sup>"What seek you for your son, sweetest mother?" <sup>3</sup>pastime.

## PHILIP SPARROW

So sad and so demure,  
 Behaving her so sure,  
 With words of pleasure  
 She would make to the lure<sup>1</sup>  
 And any man convert  
 To give her his whole heart.  
 She made me sore amazed  
 Upon her when I gazed,  
 Methought mine heart was crazed,  
 My eyen were so dazed!  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Quomodo dilexi legem tuam, domina!*<sup>2</sup>  
*Recedant vetera, nova sunt omnia.*<sup>3</sup>

And to amend her tale,<sup>4</sup>  
 When she list to avail,<sup>5</sup>  
 And with her fingers smale,  
 And hands soft as silk  
 Whiter than the milk,  
 That are so quickly veined,  
 Wherewith my hand she stained,  
 Lord, how I was pained!  
 Unneth I me refrained!  
 How she me had reclaimed,  
 And me to her retained,  
 Embracing therewithall  
 Her goodly middle small

<sup>1</sup>attract - a metaphor from falconry.

<sup>2</sup>"O how I love thy law, O Lord!" (Ps. cxix. 97).

<sup>3</sup>"Old things are passed away, all things are new" (2 Cor. v. 17).

<sup>4</sup>to make up her list of perfections.

<sup>5</sup>i.e. avail herself.

With sides long and strait!  
 To tell you what conceit  
 I had then in a trice,  
 The matter were too nice<sup>1</sup> –  
 And yet there was no vice,  
 Nor yet no villany,  
 But only fantasy!  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Iniquos odio habui!*<sup>2</sup>  
*Non calumnientur me superbi.*<sup>3</sup>

But whereto should I note  
 How often did I toot  
 Upon her pretty foot?  
 It rased<sup>4</sup> mine heart-root  
 To see her tread the ground  
 With heelés short and round!  
 She is plainly express  
 Egeria, the goddess,  
 And like to her image,  
 Emporturéd with corage,  
 A lovers' pilgrimage;  
 There is no beast savage,  
 Ne no tiger so wood,<sup>5</sup>  
 But she would change his mood,  
 Such relucént grace  
 Is forméd in her face!  
 For this most goodly flower,

<sup>1</sup>delicate.

<sup>2</sup>"I hate vain thoughts!" (Ps. cxix. 113).

<sup>3</sup>"Let not the proud oppress me" (Ps. cxix. 122).

<sup>4</sup>bruised.

<sup>5</sup>mad.

This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Mirabilia testimonia tua!*<sup>1</sup>  
*Sicut novellae plantationes in juventute sua.*<sup>2</sup>

So goodly as she dresses,  
 So properly she presses  
 The bright golden tresses  
 Of her hair so fine,  
 Like Phœbus' beams shine!  
 Whereto should I disclose  
 The gartering of her hose?  
 It is for to suppose  
 How that she can wear  
 Gorgeously her gear;  
 Her fresh<sup>3</sup> habiliments  
 With other implements  
 To serve for all intents,  
 Like Dame Flora, queen  
 Of lusty summer green:  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Clamavi in toto corde, exudi me!*<sup>4</sup>  
*Misericordia tua magna est super me.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Wonderful are thy testimonies!" (Ps. cxix. 129).

<sup>2</sup>"That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth"  
 (Ps. cxliv. 12).

<sup>3</sup>elegant.

<sup>4</sup>"I have cried with my whole heart, hear me!" (Ps. cxix. 145).

<sup>5</sup>"Great is thy mercy towards me" (Ps. lxxxvi. 13).

Her kirtle so goodly laced,  
 And under that is braced<sup>1</sup>  
 Such pleasures that I may  
 Neither write nor say!  
 Yet though I write with ink,  
 No man can let me think,  
 For thought hath liberty,  
 Thought is frank and free;  
 To think a merry thought  
 It cost me little nor nought.  
 Would God mine homely style  
 Were polished with the file  
 Of Cicero's eloquence,  
 To praise her excellence!  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina,*  
*Principes persecuti sunt me gratis!*<sup>2</sup>  
*Omnibus consideratis,*  
*Paradisus voluptatis*  
*Haec virgo est dulcissima.*<sup>3</sup>

My pen it is unable,  
 My hand it is unstable,  
 My reason rude and dull  
 To praise her at the full;  
 Goodly Mistress Jane,  
 Sober, demure Diane;  
 Jane this mistress hight,

<sup>1</sup>ready.

<sup>2</sup>"Princes have persecuted me without cause" (Ps. cxix. 161).

<sup>3</sup>With all things considered, of heavenly pleasures this girl is the sweetest.

The lode-star of delight,  
 Dame Venus of all pleasure,  
 The well of worldly treasure!  
 She doth exceed and pass  
 In prudence Dame Pallas;  
 For this most goodly flower,  
 This blossom of fresh colour,  
 So Jupiter me succour,  
 She flourisheth new and new  
 In beauty and virtue:  
*Hac claritate gemina,*  
*O gloriosa foemina!*

*Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine!*<sup>1</sup>  
 With this psalm, *Domine, probasti me,*<sup>2</sup>  
 Shall sail over the sea,  
 With *Tibi, Domine, commendamus,*<sup>3</sup>  
 On pilgrimage to Saint James,<sup>4</sup>  
 For shrimps, and for prawns,<sup>5</sup>  
 And for stalking cranes!  
 And where my pen hath offended,  
 I pray you it may be amended  
 By discreet consideration  
 Of your wise reformation.  
 I have not offended, I trust,  
 If it be sadly discust.  
 It were no gentle guise  
 This treatise to despise  
 Because I have written and said  
 Honour of this fair maid.  
 Wherefore should I be blamed,  
 That I Jane have named,  
 And famously proclaimed?

<sup>1</sup>"Give them eternal rest, O Lord."

<sup>2</sup>"O Lord, thou hast searched me."

<sup>3</sup>"We commend ourselves to thee, O Lord."

<sup>4</sup>i.e. of Compostella.

<sup>5</sup>prawns.

She is worthy to be enrolled  
With letters of gold.

*Car elle vault.*<sup>1</sup>

*Per me laurigerum Britonum Skeltonida vatem  
Laudibus eximiis merito haec redimita puella est.  
Formosam cecini, qua non formosior ulla est;  
Formosam potius quam commendaret Homerus.  
Sic juvat interdum rigidos recreare labores,  
Nec minus hoc titulo tersa Minerva mea est.*<sup>2</sup>

*Rien que playsere.*

*Thus endeth the Book of Philip Sparrow.*

<sup>1</sup>For she is worthy.

<sup>2</sup>The general sense of the above I take to be as follows: "Through me, Skelton, Laureate of Britain, this girl is deservedly honoured with praise. Lovely I called her, than whom none is more lovely; none so fair that Homer would rather praise. So it delights me, from time to time, to renew stern toil [?], nor is my art less pure than this title."





*Hereafter followeth the Book called*

ELINOR RUMMING

*The Tunning of Elinor Rummung, by Skelton Laureate*

Tell you I chill,<sup>1</sup>  
If that ye will  
A while be still,  
Of a comely Jill  
That dwelt on a hill:  
But she is not gryl,<sup>2</sup>  
For she is somewhat sage  
And well worn in age:  
For her visage  
It would assuage  
A man's courage.

Her loathly lere<sup>3</sup>  
Is nothing clear,  
But ugly of cheer,  
Droopy and drowsy,  
Scurvy and lowsy,  
Her face all bowsy,  
Comely crinkléd,  
Woundrously wrinkléd,  
Like a roast pig's ear,  
Bristléd with hair.

Her lewd lips twain,  
They slaver, men sayne,  
Like a ropy rain,  
A gummy glaire.<sup>4</sup>  
She is ugly fair:  
Her nose somedeles hookéd,  
And camously crooked,<sup>5</sup>  
Never stopping,  
But ever dropping;

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Ich will. <sup>2</sup>fierce. <sup>3</sup>skin. <sup>4</sup>viscous matter. <sup>5</sup>i.e. snub-nosed.

## ELINOR RUMMING

Her skin, loose and slack,  
Grainéd like a sack;  
With a crooked back.

Her eyen gowndy<sup>1</sup>  
Are full unsowndy,  
For they are bleared;  
And she gray haired,  
Jawed like a jetty;  
A man would have pitty  
To see how she is gumméd,  
Fingered and thumbéd,  
Gently jointed,  
Greased and annointed  
Up to the knuckles;  
The bones of her huckels<sup>2</sup>  
Like as they were with buckels  
Together made fast.  
Her youth is far past!  
Footed like a plane,  
Leggéd like a crane,  
And yet she will jet  
Like a jollivet,<sup>3</sup>  
In her furréd flocket,<sup>4</sup>  
And gray russet rocket,<sup>5</sup>  
With simper and cocket.<sup>6</sup>  
Her hood of Lincoln green  
It has been hers, I ween,  
More than forty year;  
And so doth it appear,  
For the green bare threadès  
Look like sere weedès,  
Witheréd like hay,  
The wool worn away.  
And yet, I darè say,  
She thinketh herself gay

<sup>1</sup>full of matter.<sup>4</sup>cloak with sleeves.<sup>2</sup>hips.<sup>5</sup>jumper or dress.<sup>3</sup>gay young thing.<sup>6</sup>coquetry.

Upon the holy day  
 When she doth her array  
 And girdeth in her geets<sup>1</sup>  
 Stitched and pranked<sup>2</sup> with pleats;  
 Her kirtle, Bristol-red,  
 With clothes upon her head  
 That weigh a sow of lead,  
 Writhen in wondrous wise  
 After the Saracen's guise,<sup>3</sup>  
 With a whim-wham<sup>4</sup>  
 Knit with a trim-tram  
 Upon her brain-pan;  
 Like an Egyptian<sup>5</sup>  
 Cappéd about.

When she goeth out  
 Herself for to shew,  
 She driveth down the dew  
 With a pair of heelès  
 As broad as two wheelès;  
 She hobbles as a gose<sup>6</sup>  
 With her blanket hose,  
 Her shoon smeared with tallow,  
 Greaséd upon dirt  
 That bawdeth<sup>7</sup> her skirt.

## FIT THE FIRST

And this comely dame,  
 I understand, her name  
 Is Elinor Rumming,  
 At home in her winning<sup>8</sup>;  
 And as men say  
 She dwelt in Surrey,  
 In a certain stead<sup>9</sup>  
 Beside Leatherhead.

<sup>1</sup>clothes.    <sup>2</sup>decked.    <sup>3</sup>fashion.    <sup>4</sup>trinket. •    <sup>5</sup>gipsy.  
<sup>6</sup>goose.    <sup>7</sup>befouls.    <sup>8</sup>dwelling.    <sup>9</sup>place.

## ELINOR RUMMING

She is a tonnish gib,<sup>1</sup>  
 The devil and she be sib.<sup>2</sup>

But to make up my tale,  
 She breweth nappy ale,  
 And maketh thereof pot-sale  
 To travellers, to tinkers,  
 To sweaters, to swinkers,  
 And all good ale-drinkers,  
 That will nothing spare  
 But drink till they stare  
 And bring themselves bare,  
 With "*Now away the mare!*"  
 And let us slay care."  
 As wise as an hare!

Come who so will  
 To Elinor on the hill  
 With "Fill the cup, fill!"  
 And sit there by still,  
 Early and late.  
 Thither cometh Kate,  
 Cisly, and Sare,  
 With their legs bare,  
 And also their feet  
 Hardely<sup>3</sup> full unsweet;  
 With their heelés daggéd,<sup>4</sup>  
 Their kirtles all to-jaggéd,  
 Their smockès all to-raggéd,  
 With titters and tatters,  
 Bring dishes and platters,  
 With all their might running  
 To Elinor Rummung  
 To have of her tunnung:  
 She lendeth them on the same,  
 And thus beginneth the game.

<sup>1</sup>a beery old cat.<sup>2</sup>akin.<sup>3</sup>Assuredly.<sup>4</sup>bemired.

Some wenches come unlacéd,  
Some housewives come unbracéd,  
With their naked paps,  
That flips and flaps:  
It wigs and it wags  
Like tawny saffron bags,  
A sort of foul drabs  
All scurvy with scabs:  
Some be flybitten,  
Some skewed as a kitten;  
Some with a shoe-clout  
Bind their heads about;  
Some have no hair-lace,  
Their locks about their face,  
Their tresses untrussed  
All full of unlust<sup>1</sup>;  
Some look strawry,  
Some cawry-mawry:  
Full untidy tegs,  
Like rotten eggs.  
Such a lewd sort  
To Elinor resort  
From tide to tide.  
Abide, abide!  
And to you shall be told  
How her ale is sold  
To Maud and to Mold.<sup>2</sup>

## FIT THE SECOND

Some have no money  
That thither comè  
For their ale to pay.  
That is a shrewd aray<sup>3</sup>!  
Elinor sweared, "Nay,  
Ye shall not bear away

<sup>1</sup>unsavouriness<sup>2</sup>Molly (perhaps).<sup>3</sup>a bad case.

Mine ale for nought,  
 By Him that me bought!<sup>1</sup>  
 With "Hey, dog, hey!  
 Have these hogs away!"  
 With "Get me a staffè,  
 The swine eat my draffè!<sup>1</sup>  
 Strike the hogs with a club,  
 They have drunk up my swilling-tub!"  
 For, be there never so much press,  
 These swine go to the high dais,  
 The sow with her pigs,  
 The boar his tail wrigs,  
 His rump also he frigs?<sup>2</sup>  
 Against the high bench!  
 With, "Fo, there's a stench!  
 Gather up, thou wench;  
 Seest thou not what is fall?<sup>3</sup>  
 Take up dirt and all,  
 And bear out of the hall:  
 God give it ill preving,<sup>4</sup>  
 Cleanly as evil 'chieving!"

But let us turn plain,  
 Where we left again.  
 For as ill a patch as that  
 The hens run in the mashvat;  
 For they go to roost  
 Straight over the ale-joust,<sup>5</sup>  
 And dung, when it comes,  
 In the ale tuns.<sup>6</sup>  
 Then Elinor taketh  
 The mash-bowl, and shaketh  
 The hens' dung away,  
 And skimmeth it into a tray  
 Whereas the yeast is,

<sup>1</sup>hog-wash.<sup>4</sup>a bad end.<sup>2</sup>scratches.<sup>5</sup>joist.<sup>3</sup>befallen.<sup>6</sup>tumbles.

With her mangy fistès:  
 And sometime she blens<sup>1</sup>  
 The dung of her hens  
 And the ale together,  
 And sayeth "Gossip, come hither,  
 This ale shall be thicker,  
 And flower the more quicker;  
 For I may tell you  
 I learned it of a Jew  
 When I began to brew,  
 And I have found it true.  
 Drink now while it is new:  
 An ye may it brook,  
 It shall make you look  
 Younger than ye be  
 Yearès two or three,  
 For ye may prove it by me.  
 Behold," she said, "and see  
 How bright I am of ble!<sup>1</sup>  
 I am not cast away,  
 That can my husband say;  
 When we kiss and play  
 In lust and in liking  
 He calleth me his whiting,  
 His mulling and his miting,  
 His nobbès and his coney,  
 His sweeting and his honey,  
 With 'Bass,<sup>2</sup> my pretty bonny,  
 Thou art worth goods and money!<sup>3</sup>  
 Thus make I my fellow fonny,<sup>4</sup>  
 Till that he dream and dronny<sup>5</sup>:  
 For, after all our sport,  
 Then will he rout<sup>6</sup> and snort:  
 Then sweetly together we lie  
 As two piggès in a sty."

<sup>1</sup>blends.<sup>2</sup>complexion.<sup>3</sup>Kiss me.<sup>4</sup>amorous.<sup>5</sup>drone.<sup>6</sup>snore.

## ELINOR RUMMING

To cease meseemeth best,  
And of this tale to rest,  
And for to leave this letter  
Because it is no better,  
And because it is no sweeter;  
We will no further rime  
Of it at this time,  
But we will turné plain  
Where we left again.

## FIT THE THIRD

Instead of coin and money  
Some bring her a coney,  
And some a pot with honey,  
Some salt, and some a spoon,  
Some their hose, and some their shoon;  
Some run a good trot  
With a skillet or a pot;  
Some fill their pot full  
Of good Lemster wool:  
An housewife of trust,  
When she is a-thirst,  
Such a web can spin,  
Her thrift is full thin.

Some go straight thither,  
Be it slaty<sup>1</sup> or slither:  
They hold the highway,  
They care not what men say,  
Be that as be may.  
Some, loth to be espied,  
Start in at the back-side  
Over the hedge and pale,  
And all for the good ale.

<sup>1</sup>miry.



Some run till they sweat,  
Bring with them malt or wheat,  
And Dame Elinor entreat  
To birl<sup>1</sup> them of the best.

Then cometh another guest:  
She sweared by the rood of rest  
Her lippès are so dry  
Without drink she must die,  
"Therefore fill it by and by,  
And have here a peck of rye!"

Anon cometh another,  
As dry as the other,  
And with her doth bring  
Meal, salt, or other thing,  
Her harvest girdle, her wedding-ring,  
To pay for her scot  
As cometh to her lot.  
One bringeth her husband's hood  
Because the ale is good;  
Another brought her his cap  
To offer to the ale-tap,  
With flax and with tow;  
And some brought sour dough  
With "Hey" and with "Ho!  
Sit we down a row,  
And drink till we blow,  
And pipe 'Tirly Tirlow!'"

Some laid to pledge  
Their hatchet and their wedge,  
Their hekell<sup>2</sup> and their reel,  
Their rock,<sup>3</sup> their spinning-wheel;  
And some went so narrow  
They laid to pledge their wharrow,

<sup>1</sup>pour them out.

<sup>2</sup>flax-comb.

<sup>3</sup>distaff.

## ELINOR RUMMING

Their ribskin<sup>1</sup> and their spindle,  
 Their needle and their thimble:  
 Here was scant thrift  
 When they made such a shift.

Their thirst was so great  
 They asked never for meat,  
 But drink, still drink,  
 And "Let the cat wink,  
 Let us wash our gummés  
 From the dry crummés!"

## FIT THE FOURTH

Some for very need  
 Laid down a skein of thread,  
 And some a skein of yarn;  
 Some brought from the barn  
 Both beans and peas,  
 Small chaffer doth ease  
 Sometime, now and than;  
 Another there was that ran  
 With a good brass-pan,  
 Her colour was full wan;  
 She ran in all haste,  
 Unbraced and unlaced,  
 Tawny, swart, and sallow  
 Like a cake of tallow:  
 I swear by all hallow<sup>2</sup>  
 It was a stale<sup>3</sup> to take  
 The devil in a brake<sup>4</sup>!

And then came halting Joan,  
 And brought a gambone<sup>5</sup>  
 Of bacon that was reasty:  
 But, Lord, as she was testy,

<sup>1</sup>leather apron (?).    <sup>2</sup>all saints.    <sup>3</sup>lure.    <sup>4</sup>trap.    <sup>5</sup>gammon.

Angry as a waspy!  
 She began to gape and gaspy,  
 And bade Elinor go bet<sup>1</sup>  
 And fill in good met<sup>2</sup>;

Another brought a spick  
 Of a bacon flick,<sup>3</sup>  
 Her tongue was very quick  
 But she spake somewhat thick:  
 Her fellow did stammer and stut,  
 But she was a foul slut,  
 For her mouth foaméd  
 And her belly groanéd:  
 Joan said she had eaten a fiest.<sup>4</sup>  
 "By Christ," said she, "thou liest,  
 I have as sweet a breath  
 As thou, with shameful death!"

Then Elinor said, "Ye calettes,<sup>5</sup>  
 I shall break your palettes,<sup>6</sup>  
 Without ye now cease!"  
 And so was made the peace.

Then thither came drunken Alice,  
 And she was full of talès,  
 Of tidings in Walès,  
 And of Saint James in Galès,<sup>7</sup>  
 And of the Portingalès,<sup>8</sup>  
 With "Lo, gossip, ywis,  
 Thus and thus it is:  
 There hath been great war  
 Between Temple Bar  
 And the Cross in Cheap,  
 And there came an heap  
 Of mill-stones in a rout . . ."  
 She speaketh thus in her snout,

<sup>1</sup>hurry up.    <sup>2</sup>measure.    <sup>3</sup>flich.    <sup>4</sup>fast.  
<sup>5</sup>jades.    <sup>6</sup>pates.    <sup>7</sup>Galicia.    <sup>8</sup>Portuguese.

Snivelling in her nose  
 As though she had the pose.<sup>1</sup>  
 "Lo, here is an old tippet,<sup>2</sup>  
 An ye will give me a sippet  
 Of your stale ale,  
 God send you good sale!"  
 And as she was drinking  
 She fell in a winking  
 With a barlichood,<sup>3</sup>  
 She pissed where she stood.  
 Then began she to weep,  
 And forthwith fell asleep.  
 Elinor took her up  
 And blessed her with a cup  
 Of new ale in corns<sup>4</sup>:  
 Alice found therein no thorns,  
 But supped it up at ones,<sup>5</sup>  
 She found therein no bones

## FIT THE FIFTH

Now in cometh another rabble:  
 First one with a ladle,  
 Another with a cradle,  
 And with a side-saddle:  
 And there began a fabble,<sup>6</sup>  
 A clattering and babble  
 Of foolish Philly<sup>7</sup>  
 That had a foal with Willy,  
 With "Jayst you!" and "Gup gilly!"  
 She could not lie stilly.

Then came in a jennet<sup>8</sup>  
 And swore, "By Saint Bennet,

<sup>1</sup>catarrh.<sup>2</sup>hood.<sup>3</sup>a drunken rage.<sup>4</sup>Simply, new ale.<sup>5</sup>once.<sup>6</sup>jabbering.<sup>7</sup>Phillis.<sup>8</sup>young mare.<sup>9</sup>little horse.

I drank not this sennet<sup>1</sup>  
 A draught to my pay<sup>2</sup>!  
 Elinor, I thee pray  
 Of thine ale let us essay,  
 And have here a pilch of gray<sup>3</sup>:  
 I wear skins of coney,<sup>4</sup>  
 That causeth I look so donny<sup>5</sup>!”

Another then did hitch her,  
 And brought a pottle-pitcher,<sup>6</sup>  
 A tonnel, and a bottle,  
 But she had lost the stopple:  
 She cut off her shoe-sole,  
 And stoppéd therewith the hole.

Among all the blimmer<sup>7</sup>  
 Another brought a skimmer,  
 A frying-pan, and a slicer:  
 Elinor made the price  
 For good ale each wit.

Then start in mad Kit  
 That had little wit:  
 She seeméd somedeale sick  
 And brought a penny chick  
 To Dame Elinor  
 For a draught of liquor.

Then Margery Milkduck  
 Her kirtle she did uptuck  
 An inch above her knee  
 Her legs that ye might see;  
 But they were sturdy and stubbéd,<sup>8</sup>  
 Mighty pestles and clubbéd,

<sup>1</sup>week.<sup>2</sup>satisfaction.<sup>3</sup>skin-cloak.• <sup>4</sup>rabbit.<sup>5</sup>poorly.<sup>6</sup>a two-quart pitcher.<sup>7</sup>din.<sup>8</sup>stumpy.

## ELINOR RUMMING

As fair and as white  
 As the foot of a kite:  
 She was somewhat foul,  
 Crooked-necked like an owl;  
 And yet she brought her fees,  
 A cantel of Essex cheese,  
 Was well a foot thick  
 Full of maggots quick:  
 It was huge and great,  
 And mighty strong meat  
 For the devil to eat:  
 It was tart and pungete!<sup>1</sup>

Another set of sluts:  
 Some brought walnuts,  
 Some apples, some pears,  
 Some brought their clipping shears,  
 Some brought this and that,  
 Some brought I wot n'ere what;  
 Some brought their husband's hat,  
 Some puddings and links,  
 Some tripes that stinks.

But of all this throng  
 One came them among,  
 She seemed half a leech,  
 And began to preach  
 Of the Tuesday in the week  
 When the mare doth kick,  
 Of the virtue of an unset leek,  
 Of her husband's breek;  
 With the feathers of a quail  
 She could to Bordeaux sail;  
 And with good ale barmé  
 She could make a charmé  
 To help withal a stitch:  
 She seemed to be a witch.

<sup>1</sup>pungent.

Another brought two goslings  
That were noughty froslings<sup>1</sup>;  
She brought them in a wallet,  
She was a comely callet<sup>2</sup>:  
The goslings were untied,  
Elinor began to chide,  
"They be wretchocks<sup>3</sup> thou hast brought,  
They are sheer shaking nought!"

## FIT THE SIXTH

Maude Ruggy thither skipped:  
She was ugly hipped,  
And ugly thick lipped,  
Like an onion sided,  
Like tan leather hidéd:  
She had her so guided  
Between the cup and the wall  
That she was there withall  
Into a palsy fall:  
With that her head shakéd,  
And her handés quakéd,  
One's head would have askéd  
To see her naked.  
She drank so of the dregs,  
The dropsy was in her legs;  
Her face glist'ring like glass,  
All foggy fat she was:  
She had also the gout  
In all her joints about;  
Her breath was sour and stale,  
And smelléd all of ale:  
Such a bedfellow  
Would make one cast his craw<sup>4</sup>!

<sup>1</sup>worthless frost-bitten things.<sup>2</sup>the smallest of the brood.<sup>3</sup>jadé.<sup>4</sup>vomit.

## ELINOR RUMMING

But yet for all that  
She drank on the mashvat.

There came an old ribibe<sup>1</sup>:  
She halted of a kibe,<sup>2</sup>  
And had broken her shin  
At the threshold coming in,  
And fell so wide open  
That one might see her token,  
The devil thereon be wroken<sup>3</sup>!  
What need all this be spoken?  
She yelléd like a calf.  
"Rise up, on God's half!"  
Said Elinor Rummung,  
"I beshrew thee for thy coming!"  
And as she at her did pluck,  
"Quack, quack!" said the duck  
In that lampatram's lap;  
With "Fie, cover thy shap  
With some flip flap!"  
"God give it ill hap,"  
Said Elinor, "for shame!" —  
Like an honest dame.  
Up she start, half lame,  
And scanty could go  
For pain and for woe.

In came another dant,  
With a goose and a gant:  
She had a wide weasant,<sup>4</sup>  
She was nothing pleasant,  
Neckéd like an elephant;  
It was a bulliphant,  
A greedy cormorant.

Another brought her garlic heads,  
Another brought her beads  
(Of jet or of coal)  
To offer to the ale pole.

<sup>1</sup>crone.<sup>2</sup>blister.<sup>3</sup>wrecked.<sup>4</sup>windpipe.



Some brought a wimble,  
 Some brought a thimble,  
 Some brought a silk lace,  
 Some brought a pincase,  
 Some her husband's gown,  
 Some a pillow of down,  
 Some of the napery;

And all this shift they make  
 For the good ale sake.

"A straw!" said Bely, "stand utter,<sup>1</sup>  
 For we have eggès and butter,  
 And of pigeons a pair."<sup>2</sup>

Then start forth a fizgig,<sup>3</sup>  
 And she brought a boar pig,  
 The flesh thereof was rank,  
 And her breath strongly stank;  
 Yet, ere she went, she drank,  
 And gat her great thank  
 Of Elinor for her ware  
 That she thither bare  
 To pay for her share.  
 Now truly, to my thinking,  
 This is a solemn drinking!

## FIT THE SEVENTH

"Soft!" quod one hight Sybil,  
 "And let me with you bibble."  
 She sat down in the place  
 With a sorry face  
 Whey-worméd about.  
 Garnished was her snout

<sup>1</sup>A line missing.

<sup>2</sup>stand back. •

<sup>3</sup>A line missing.

<sup>4</sup>a light wench.

## ELINOR RUMMING

With here and there a puscull<sup>1</sup>  
 Like a scabbéd muscull.<sup>2</sup>  
 "This ale," said she, "is noppo;  
 Let us suppè and soppo  
 And not spill a droppy,  
 For, so may I hoppy,<sup>3</sup>  
 It cooleth well my croppy.<sup>4</sup>

"Dame Elinor," said she,  
 "Have here is for me –  
 A clout of London pins!"  
 And with that she begins  
 The pot to her pluck  
 And drank a "good-luck."  
 She swung up a quart  
 At once for her part:  
 Her paunch was so puffed,  
 And so with ale stuffed,  
 Had she not hied apace  
 She had defiled the place.

Then began the sport  
 Among that drunken sort.<sup>5</sup>  
 "Dame Elinor," said they,  
 "Lend here a cock of hay  
 To make all thing clean –  
 Ye wot well what we mean!"

But, sir, among all  
 That sat in that hall  
 There was a prickmedenty<sup>6</sup>  
 Sat like a sainty  
 And began to painty<sup>7</sup>  
 As though she would fainty:  
 She made it as coy  
 As a *lege de moy*:

<sup>1</sup>pimple.<sup>2</sup>set.<sup>3</sup>muscle.<sup>4</sup>a pernickety one.<sup>5</sup>have good hap.<sup>6</sup>feign.<sup>7</sup>gullet.

She was not half so wise  
As she was peevish nise.<sup>1</sup>  
She said never a word,  
But rose from the board  
And called for our dame,  
Elinor by name.  
We supposed, ywis,  
That she rose to piss:  
But the very ground  
Was for to compound  
With Elinor in the spence,<sup>2</sup>  
To pay for her expence.  
"I have no penny nor groat  
To pay," she said, "God wote,  
For washing of my throat,  
But my beads of amber  
Bear them to your chamber."  
Then Elinor did them hide  
Within her beddès side.

But some then sat right sad  
That nothing had  
There of their awn,  
Neither guilt nor pawn<sup>3</sup>:  
Such were there many  
That had not a penny,  
But, when they should walk,  
Were fain with a chalk  
To score on the balk,<sup>4</sup>  
Or score on the tail:  
God give it ill hail!<sup>5</sup>  
For my fingers itch,  
I have written too mich  
Of this mad mumming  
Of Elinor Rummung!

<sup>1</sup>querulous.<sup>2</sup>store-room.<sup>3</sup>Neither money nor pledge.<sup>4</sup>board.<sup>5</sup>ill-health.

Thus endeth the geste<sup>1</sup>  
Of this worthy feast.

Quod Skelton, Laureate.

LAUREATI SKELTONIDIS IN DESPECTU  
MALIGNANTIIUM DISTICHON<sup>2</sup>

*Quamvis insanis, quamvis marcescis inanis,  
Invide, cantamus: haec loca plena jocis.<sup>3</sup>*

*Bien men souvient.*

*Omnes foeminaes, quae nimis bibulae sunt, vel quae sordida  
labe squaloris, aut qua spurca foeditatis macula, aut verbosa  
loquacitate notantur, poeta invitat ad audiendum hunc libellum,  
etc.<sup>4</sup>*

*Ebria, squalida, sordida foemina, prodiga verbis,  
Huc surrat, properet, veniat! Sua gesta libellus  
Iste volutabit: Paeon sua plectra sonando  
Materiam risus cantabit carmine rauco.<sup>5</sup>*

*Finis.*

Quod Skelton, Laureate.

<sup>1</sup>story.

<sup>2</sup>The distich of Skelton Laureate in contempt of evil-speakers.

<sup>3</sup>Although you are mad, although in your inanity you languish, malicious one, we sing: these places are full of jests.

<sup>4</sup>All women, who are either too drunken, or squalid and dirty, or are distinguished by a filthy mask of foulness, or by wordy loquacity, the poet invites to hear this little book.

<sup>5</sup>The drunken, squalid, dirty woman, prodigal of words, let her run hither, let her hurry, let her come. This little book will tell its own tale: The hymn of praise, sounding its own music, will sing with a harsh note the stuff of laughter.

## AGAINST A COMELY COISTROWN<sup>1</sup>

*That curiously chanted and currishly countered<sup>2</sup> and madly  
in his musicks mockishly made against the ix. Muses of politic  
poems and poets matriculate.*

Of all nations under the heaven,  
These frantic foolis I hate most of all;  
For though they stumble in the sinnès seven,  
In peevishness<sup>3</sup> yet they snapper<sup>4</sup> and fall,  
Which men the eighth deadly sin call.  
This peevish proud, this prendergest,  
When he is well, yet can he not rest.

A sweet sugar-loaf and sour bayards bun<sup>5</sup>  
Be somedele like in form and shap,  
The one for a duke, the other for dun,  
A maunchet<sup>6</sup> for morell<sup>7</sup> thereon to snap.  
His heart is too high to have any hap;  
But for in his gamut carp<sup>8</sup> that he can,  
Lo, Jack would be a gentleman!

With hey trolly lolly, whip here, Jack,  
*Alumbek sodildim sillorim ben!*  
Curiously he can both counter and knak<sup>9</sup>  
Of Martin Swart<sup>10</sup> and all his merry men.  
Lord, how Perkin is proud of his pea-hen!  
But ask where he findeth among his monochords  
An holy water clerk a ruler of lords.

<sup>1</sup>Scullion.      <sup>2</sup>sang.      <sup>3</sup>folly, perversity.      <sup>4</sup>stumble.

<sup>5</sup>horse-loaf.      <sup>6</sup>small white loaf.      <sup>7</sup>a black horse.

<sup>8</sup>sing (badly).      <sup>9</sup>sing affectedly.

<sup>10</sup>A German nobleman who lead the auxiliaries sent by Duchess of Burgundy with Lambert Simnel, and who fell fighting at Battle of Stoke.

He cannot find it in rule nor in space:

He solfas too haute,<sup>1</sup> his treble is too high;  
 He braggeth of his birth, that born was full base;  
 His music without measure, too sharp is his *Mi*;  
 He trimmeth in his tenor to counter pirdewy;  
 His descant is busy, it is without a mean;  
 Too fat is his fancy, his wit is too lean.

He lumb'reth on a lewd lute *Roty bully joys*

Rumble down, tumble down, hey go, now, now!  
 He fumbleth in his fingering an ugly good noise:  
 It seemeth the sobbing of an old sow!  
 He would be made much of, an he wist how;  
 Well sped in spindles and turning of tavells<sup>2</sup>;  
 A bungler, a brawler, a picker of quarrels.

Comely he clappeth a pair of clavichords;

He whistleth so sweetly, he maketh me to sweat;  
 His descant is dashed full of dischords;  
 A red angry man, but easy to entreat:  
 An usher of the hall fain would I get  
 To point this proud page a place and a room,  
 For Jack would be a gentleman, that late was a groom!

Jack would jet,<sup>3</sup> and yet Jill said nay,

He counteth in his countenance to check with the best:  
 A malapert meddler that prieth for his prey,  
 In a dish dare he rush at the ripést,  
 Dreaming in dumpès to wrangle and to wrest:  
 He findeth a proportion in his prick-song,<sup>4</sup>  
 To drink at a draught a large and a long.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>highly.

<sup>2</sup>an instrument used in silk-weaving.

<sup>3</sup>strut.

<sup>4</sup>counterpoint.

<sup>5</sup>characters in old music: one large=two longs, one long=two breves.

Nay, jape not with him, he is no small fool,  
 It is a solemn sire and a sullain:  
 For lordes and ladies learn at his school,  
 He teacheth them so wisely to solf and to fain<sup>1</sup>  
 That neither they sing well prick-song nor plain:  
 This Doctor Devias commencéd in a cart,  
 A master, a minstrel, a fiddler, a fart.

What though ye can counter *Custodi nos*?<sup>2</sup>  
 As well it becometh you, a parish town clerk,  
 To sing *Sospitati dedid aegros*.<sup>3</sup>  
 Yet be ye not too bold to brawl nor to bark  
 At me that meddled nothing with your wark:  
 Correct first thyself: walk, and be nought!  
 Deem what thou list, thou knowest not my thought.

A proverb of old: "Say well or be still!"  
 Ye are too unhappy occasion to find  
 Upon me to clatter, or else to say ill.  
 Now have I shewed you part of your proud mind:  
 Take this in worth, the best is behind!  
 Written at Croydon by Crowland in the Clay,  
 On candlemas even, the calends of May.

<sup>1</sup>sing falsetto.    <sup>2</sup>Preserve us.    <sup>3</sup>He gave succour to the sick.

## POEMS AGAINST GARNESCHE

*Skelton Laureate, Defender, Against Master Garneshe,  
Challenger, Et Cetera.*

Sith ye have me challengéd, Master Garnesche,  
Rudely reviling me in the king's noble hall,  
Such another challenger could me no man wish,  
But if it were Sir Termagant that tourneyed without nall;  
For Sir Frollo de Franko<sup>1</sup> was never half so tall.  
But say me now, Sir Satrapas, what authority ye have  
In your challenge, Sir Chesten, to call me a knave?

What, have ye kithéd<sup>2</sup> you a knight, Sir Douglas the  
Doughty,  
So currishly to beknave me in the king's palace?  
Ye strong sturdy stallion, so stern and stouty,  
Ye bear ye bold as Barabas, or Sir Terry of Thrace;  
Ye girn<sup>3</sup> grimly with your gummés and with your grisly  
face!

But say me yet, Sir Satrapas, what authority ye have  
In your challenge, Sir Chesten, to call me a knave?

Ye foul, fierce and fell, as Sir Ferumbras the freke,<sup>4</sup>  
Sir captain of Catywade, catacumbras of Cayre,<sup>5</sup>  
Though ye be lusty as Sir Libius<sup>6</sup> lances to breke,  
Yet your countenance uncomely, your face is not fair:  
For all your proud pranking, your pride may impair.  
But say me yet, Sir Satrapas, what authority ye have  
In your challenge, Sir Chesten, to call me a knave?

<sup>1</sup>A Roman knight, governor of Gaul, slain by King Arthur. —  
 Geoffrey of Monmouth.

<sup>2</sup>shewn.

<sup>3</sup>grin.

<sup>4</sup>warrior. A Saracen giant vanquished by Oliver. — Caxton's *Life  
Charles the Great.*

<sup>5</sup>Cairo. <sup>6</sup>See romance *Lybeaus Dis-conus (Le beau desconnu).*



Of Mantrible the Bridge,<sup>1</sup> Malchus the murrion,<sup>2</sup>  
 Nor black Balthasar with his basnet<sup>3</sup> rough as a bear,  
 Nor Lycaon, that loathly lusk,<sup>4</sup> in mine opinion,  
 Nor no boar so brimly<sup>5</sup> bristled is with hair,  
 As ye are bristled on the back for all your gay gear.  
 But say me yet, Sir Satrapas, what authority ye have  
 In your challenge, Sir Chesten, to call me a knave?

Your wind-shaken shanks, your long loathly legs,  
 Crooked as a camock,<sup>6</sup> and as a cow calfless,  
 Brings you out of favour with all female tegs:  
 That Mistress Punt put you off, it was not all causeless;  
 At Orwell hyr havyn<sup>7</sup> your anger was lawless.  
 But say me yet, Sir Satrapas, what authority ye have  
 In your challenge, Sir Chesten, to call me a knave?

I say, ye solemn Saracen, all black is your ble<sup>8</sup>;  
 As a glede glowing,<sup>9</sup> your eyen glister as glass,  
 Rolling in your hollow head, ugly to see;  
 Your teeth tainted with tawny; your snively snout doth  
 pass,<sup>10</sup>  
 Hooked as an hawk's beak, like Sir Topas.  
 Boldly bend you to battle, and busk<sup>11</sup> yourself to save:  
 Challenge yourself for a fool, call me no more knave!

*By the King's most noble commandment.*

*Skelton Laureate, Defender, Against Master Garnesche, Challenger, with Greasy, Gorbellied Godfrey, Et Cetera.*

How may I your mockery meekly tollerate,  
 Your groaning, your grunting, your groining<sup>12</sup> like a  
 swine?

<sup>1</sup>Concerning the giant who kept this bridge see Caxton, op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Moor.

<sup>3</sup>cap.

<sup>4</sup>vile creature.

<sup>5</sup>fiercely.

<sup>6</sup>crooked stick.

<sup>7</sup>by Harwich.

<sup>8</sup>complexion.

<sup>9</sup>burning coal.

<sup>10</sup>excel.

<sup>11</sup>prepare.

<sup>12</sup>rooting.

Your pride is all to-peevisch, your port inportunate:

You manticore, ye malapert, ye can both wince and whine;

Your loathsome lere<sup>1</sup> to look on, like a greaséd boot doth shine.

Ye cappéd Caiaphas copious,<sup>2</sup> your paltock<sup>3</sup> on your pate,  
Though ye prate like proud Pilate, beware of check-mate.

Whole is your brow that ye brake with Durandal<sup>4</sup> your own sword;

Why hold ye on your cap, sir, then? your pardon is expired:  
Ye hobble very homely before the king's bourd;

Ye counter umwhile<sup>5</sup> too captiously, and ere ye be desiréd;

Your moth-eaten mockish manners, they be all to-miréd.  
Ye cappéd Caiaphas copious, your paltock on your pate,  
Though ye prate like proud Pilate, beware of check-mate.

O Gabionite of Gabion, why do ye gane<sup>6</sup> and gasp?

Huf a gallant Garnesche, look on your own comely corse!

Lusty Garnesche, like a louse, ye jet full like a jasp<sup>7</sup>;

As witless as a wild goose, ye have but small remorse

Me for to challenge that of your challenge maketh so little force.<sup>8</sup>

Ye cappéd Caiaphas copious, your paltock on your pate,  
Though ye prate like proud Pilate, beware of check-mate.

Sir Guy, Sir Gawain, Sir Cayus,<sup>9</sup> for and Sir Oliveré,

Pyramus, nor Priamus,<sup>10</sup> nor Sir Pyrrus the proud,

In Arthur's ancient actès nowhere is provéd your peer;

The fashion of your physiognomy the devil in a cloud;

Your heart is too haut, ywis, it will not be allowed.

Ye cappéd Caiaphas copious, your paltock on your pate,  
Though ye prate like proud Pilate, beware of check-mate.

<sup>1</sup>skin. •      <sup>2</sup>cloaked.      <sup>3</sup>patch.      <sup>4</sup>Roland's sword.

<sup>5</sup>sing some time.      <sup>6</sup>gape.      <sup>7</sup>wasp(?)      <sup>8</sup>so little matter.

<sup>9</sup>foster brother of King Arthur.

<sup>10</sup>Who fought with Sir Gawain (*Morte d'Arthur*).

Ye ground you upon Godfrey, that grisly gorgon's face,  
 Your standard, Sir Olifaunte,<sup>1</sup> against me for to 'splay:  
 Bail, bail at you both, frantic fools! follow on the chase!  
 Come Garnesche, come Godfrey, with as many as ye may!  
 I advise you beware of this war, range you in array.  
 Ye cappéd Caiaphas copious, your paltock on your pate,  
 Though ye prate like proud Pilate, beware of check-mate.

Gup, gorbellied Godfrey, gup, Garnesche, gawdy fool!  
 To tourney or to tant with me ye are too far to seek:  
 For those twain whipslovens call for a cuck-stool<sup>2</sup>:  
 Thou manticore, ye marmoset, garnished like a Greek,  
 Wrangling, wayward, witless, raw, and nothing meek.  
 Ye cappéd Caiaphas copious, your paltock on your pate,  
 Though ye prate like proud Pilate, beware of check-mate.

*Mirres vous y,*  
 Look not too high.

*By the King's most noble commandment.*

*Skelton Laureate, Defender, Against Lusty Garnesche,  
 Well-Beseen Christopher, Challenger, Et Cetera.*

I have your lewd letter receivéd,  
 And well I have it perceivéd,  
 And your scribe I have espiéd,  
 That your mad mind contrivéd.  
 Saving your usher's rod,<sup>3</sup>  
 I cast me<sup>4</sup> not to be odd  
 With neither of you twain:  
 Therefore I write again  
 How the favour of your face  
 Is void of all good grace;

<sup>1</sup>The giant in Chaucer's *Sir Thopas*.

<sup>2</sup>a stool fixed to a long pole used for punishing scolds by plunging them into water.

<sup>3</sup>Garnesche was gentleman-usher to Henry VIII. <sup>4</sup>I design.

## MINOR SATIRES

For all your carpet cushions,  
 Ye have knavish conditions.  
 Gup, marmoset, jast ye, morell!  
 I am laureate, I am no lorell.<sup>1</sup>  
 Lewdly your time ye spend  
 My living to reprehend;  
 And will never intend  
 Your own lewdness to amend:  
 Your English lewdly<sup>2</sup> ye sort,  
 And falsely ye me report.  
 Garnesche, ye gape too wide:  
 Your knavery I will not hide,  
 For to assuage your pride.

When ye were younger of age  
 Ye were a kitchen-page,  
 A dish-washer, a drivell,<sup>3</sup>  
 In the pot your nose did snivell;  
 Ye fried and ye broiléd,  
 Ye roasted and ye boiléd,  
 Ye roasted, like a fon,<sup>4</sup>  
 A goose with the feet upon;  
 Ye sluffered up souce<sup>5</sup>  
 In my Lady Brewse's house.  
 Where to should I write  
 Of such a greasy knight?  
 A bawdy dish-clout  
 That bringeth the world about  
 With hafting and with polling,<sup>6</sup>  
 With lying and controlling.

At Guines when ye were  
 But a slender spere,<sup>7</sup>  
 Deckéd lewdly in your gear;  
 For when ye dwelt there  
 Ye had a knavish coat

<sup>1</sup>have.    <sup>2</sup>ignorantly.    <sup>3</sup>drudge.    <sup>4</sup>fool.  
<sup>5</sup>tripes.    <sup>6</sup>deceiving and stealing.    <sup>7</sup>shoot, stripling.

Was scantly worth a groat;  
In dud frieze ye were shrinéd,  
With better frieze linéd;  
The outside every day,  
Ye might no better a way;  
The inside ye did call  
Your best gown festivall.  
Your drapery ye did want,  
The ward<sup>1</sup> with you was scant.  
When ye cast a sheepes eye,  
. . . .<sup>2</sup> Mistress Andelby,  
. . . . Guines upon a gong,<sup>3</sup>  
. . . . sat somewhat too long;  
. . . . her husband's head  
. . . . mall of lead,  
. . . . that ye there preachéd,  
To her love ye not reachéd:  
Ye would have bassed<sup>4</sup> her bum  
So that she would have come  
Onto your lowsy den.  
But she of all men  
Had you most in despight,  
Ye lost her favour quite;  
Your pilléd-garlick head<sup>5</sup>  
Could occupy there no stead;  
She calléd you Sir Guy of Gaunt,  
Noséd like an elephaunt,  
A pickaxe or a twible<sup>6</sup>;  
She said how ye did bridle,  
Much like a dromedary;  
Thus with you she did wary,<sup>7</sup>  
With much matter more  
That I keep in store.

<sup>1</sup>wardrobe.<sup>2</sup>Dyce notes: portion of MS. torn off here.<sup>3</sup>privy.<sup>4</sup>kissed.<sup>5</sup>A term applied to a person whose hair has fallen off by disease.<sup>6</sup>a little axe.<sup>7</sup>war, contend.

Your breath is strong and quick;  
 Ye are an elder-stick;  
 Ye wot what I think –  
 At both ends ye stink.  
 Great danger for the king,  
 When his grace is fasting,  
 His presence to approach:  
 It is to your reproach.  
 It falleth for no swine,  
 Nor sowters,<sup>1</sup> to drink wine,  
 Nor such a noddie pole<sup>2</sup>  
 A priest for to control.

Little wit in your scribès noll,<sup>3</sup>  
 That scribbled your fond scroll,  
 Upon him for to take  
 Against me for to make,  
 Like a doctor dawpate,  
 A laureate poet for to rate.  
 Your termès are too gross,  
 Too far from the purpose,  
 To contaminate  
 And to violate  
 The dignity laureate.

Bold bayard,<sup>4</sup> ye are too blind,  
 And grow all out of kind,  
 To occupy so your mind;  
 For reason can I none find  
 Nor good rhyme in your matter:  
 I wonder that ye smatter,  
 So for a knave to clatter!  
 Ye would be called a maker<sup>5</sup>  
 And make much like Jack Raker;  
 Ye are a comely craker,<sup>6</sup>  
 Ye learned of some pie-baker!

<sup>1</sup>coblers.<sup>2</sup>ninny.<sup>3</sup>noddle.<sup>4</sup>bay horse.<sup>5</sup>composer.<sup>6</sup>vaunter.

Cast up your curious writing,  
And your dirty inditing,  
And your spiteful despiting,  
For all is not worth a miting,<sup>1</sup>  
A mackerel nor a whiting:  
Had ye gone with me to school  
And occupied no better your tool,<sup>2</sup>  
Ye should have kowthéd me a fool.<sup>3</sup>

But now, gawdy, greasy Garnesche,  
Your face I wis to varnish  
So surely it shall not tarnish.  
Though a Saracen's head ye bear,  
Rough and full of lowsy hair,  
As every man well seeth,  
Full of great knavish teeth,  
In a field of green peason,<sup>4</sup>  
Is rhyme yet out of reason;  
Your wit is so geson<sup>5</sup>  
Ye rail all out of season.

Your skin scabbéd and scurvy,  
Tawny, tannéd, and shurvy;  
Now upon this heat  
Rankly when ye sweat,  
Men say ye will wax lowsy,  
Drunken, droopy, drowsy!  
Your sword ye swear, I ween,  
So trenchant and so keen,  
Shall cut both white and green<sup>6</sup>:  
Your folly is too great  
The king's colours to threat.  
Your breath it is so fell  
And so puauntely<sup>7</sup> doth smell,

<sup>1</sup>a mite.<sup>2</sup>pen.<sup>3</sup>made me known for a fool.<sup>4</sup>peas.<sup>5</sup>scanty.<sup>6</sup>i.e. the white and green dress that Skelton wore as Laureate.<sup>7</sup>stinkingly.

## MINOR SATIRES

And so heinously doth stink,  
 That neither pump nor sink  
 Doth savour half so sour  
 Against a stormy shower.  
 O ladies of bright colour,  
 Of beauty that beareth the flower,  
 When Garnesche cometh you among  
 With his breath so strong,  
 Without ye have a confection  
 Against his poisoned infection,  
 Else with his stinking jaws  
 He will cause you cast your craws,  
 And make your stomach seek  
 Over the perch to preke.<sup>2</sup>

Now, Garnesche, gard thy gums,  
 My serpentines<sup>3</sup> and my guns  
 Against ye now I bind;  
 Thyself therefore defend.  
 Thou toad, thou scorpion,  
 Thou bawdy babion,<sup>4</sup>  
 Thou bear, thou bristled boar,  
 Thou Moorish manticore,<sup>5</sup>  
 Thou rammish stinking goat,  
 Thou fowl churlish parrote,  
 Thou grisly Gorgon glaimy,  
 Thou sweaty sloven seimy,<sup>6</sup>  
 Thou murrion, thou mawment,<sup>7</sup>  
 Thou false stinking serpent,  
 Thou mockish marmoset,  
 I will not die in thy debt!  
 Tyburn thou me assigned,  
 Where *thou* should'st have been shrined;  
 The next halter there shall be  
 I bequeath it whole to thee!

<sup>1</sup>vomit. <sup>2</sup>pitch. <sup>3</sup>kind of cannon. <sup>4</sup>filthy baboon.  
<sup>5</sup>human-headed dragon. <sup>6</sup>greasy. <sup>7</sup>Moor . . . Mahomet.



Such pilfery thou hast packéd,  
And so thyself over-watchéd  
That there thou should'st be rackéd,  
If thou were meetly matchéd.

Ye may well be bedawed,  
Ye are a fool outlawed;  
And for to tell the ground,  
Pay Stokes his five pound.  
I say, Sir Dalyrag,  
Ye bear you bold and brag  
With other menis charge:  
Ye cut your cloth too large:  
Such polling pageantis<sup>1</sup> ye play,  
To point<sup>2</sup> you fresh and gay.

And he that scribbled your scrollis,  
I reckon you in my rollis  
For two drunken soulis.  
Read and learn ye may  
How old proverbis say,  
That bird is not honest  
That 'fileth his own nest.  
If he wist what some wot,<sup>3</sup>  
The flesh basting of his coat  
Was sowéd with slender threde:  
God send you well good speed,  
With *Dominus vobiscum*!  
Good Latin for Jack a-Thrum,  
Till more matter may come.

*By the King's most noble commandment.*

<sup>1</sup>thievish pranks.

<sup>2</sup>equip.

<sup>3</sup>knew what some knew.

*Donum Leareati Distichon Contra Golliardum Garnesche  
Et Scribam Ejus.*

*Tu, Garnesche, fatuus, fatuus tuus est mage scriba:  
Qui sapuit puer, insanit vir, versus in hydram.*

*Skelton Laureate, Defender, Against Lusty Garnesche,  
Well Be-seen Christopher, Challenger, Et Cetera.*

Garnesche, Gorgon, ghastly, grime,  
I have receivéd your second rime.  
Though ye can skill of large and long,  
Ye sing alway the cuckoo song:  
Ye rail, ye rhyme, with "Hey, dog, hey!"  
Your churlish chanting is all one lay.  
Ye, sir, rail all in deformity!  
Ye have not read the property  
Of Nature's works, how they be  
Mixed with some incommodity,  
As proveth well, in his Rhetorics old,  
Cicero with his tongue of gold.  
That Nature wrought in you and me,  
Irrevocable is her decree;  
Waywardly wrought she hath in thee,  
Behold thyself, and thou may'st see;  
Thou shalt behold no where a warse,  
Thy mirror may be the devil's arse.  
With "Knave, Sir Knave, and knave again!"  
To call me knave thou takest great pain:  
The proudest knave yet of us twain  
Within thy skin he shall remain;  
The starkest knave, and least good can,<sup>1</sup>  
Thou art calléd of every man;  
The court, the country, village and town,  
Saith from thy toe unto thy crown  
Of all proud knavis thou bearest the bell,  
Loathsome as Lucifer, lowest in hell.

<sup>1</sup>knows.

On that side, on this side thou doth gazé,  
 And thinkest thyself Sir Pierre de Brézé,<sup>1</sup>  
 Thy caitiff's carcass coarse and crazy,  
 Much of thy manners I can blazé.<sup>2</sup>

Of Lombardy George Ardeson,  
 Thou would have scoréd his habergeon;  
 That gentle George the Januay,<sup>3</sup>  
 Ye would have enticed his trull away:  
 Such pageants with your friends ye play  
 With treachery ye them betray.  
 Garnesche, ye got of George with gawdry<sup>4</sup>  
 Crimson velvet for your bawdry.  
 Ye have a fantasy to Fenchurch Street,  
 With Lombard's lemmans<sup>5</sup> for to meet,  
 With "Bass me, butting, pretty Cis!"  
 Your loathsome lips love well to kiss,  
 Slaving like a slimy snail –  
 I would ye had kissed her on the tail!

Also not far from Budgè Row,  
 Ye presséd pertly to pluck a crow:  
 Ye lost your hold, unbend your bow,  
 Ye won nothing there but a mow<sup>6</sup>;  
 Ye won nothing there but a scorn;  
 She would not of it thou had sworn.  
 She said ye were colouréd with coal-dust;  
 To dally with you she had no lust.  
 She said your breath stank like a brock,  
 With "Gup, Sir Guy," ye got a mock!  
 She swear with her ye should not deal,  
 For ye were smery, like a seal,  
 And ye were hairy, like a calf;  
 She prayed you walk, on Goddès half!<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Grand-seneschal of Anjou, Poitou, and Normandy: a warrior in the reigns of Charles VII and Lewis XI.

<sup>2</sup>shew.

<sup>3</sup>Genoese.

<sup>4</sup>trickery.

<sup>5</sup>mistresses.

<sup>6</sup>mouth, mock.

<sup>7</sup>i.e. go away, for God's sake.

And thus there ye lost your prey –  
Get ye another where ye may.

Disparage ye mine ancestry?  
Ye are disposéd for to lie:  
I say, thou fell and foul flesh flie,  
In this debate I thee ascry.  
Thou claimest thee gentle, thou art a cur;  
Heralds they know thy coat armur:  
Though thou be a gentleman born,  
Yet gentleness in thee is thread-bare worn;  
Heralds from honour may thee divorce,  
For harlots haunt thine hateful corse:  
Ye bear out brothels<sup>1</sup> like a bawd,  
And get thereby a slender laud  
Between the tappet<sup>2</sup> and the wall –  
Fusty bawdias! I say not all.  
Of harlots to use such an harrès,<sup>3</sup>  
Ye breed moths in cloth of Arras.

What aileth thee, ribald, on me to rave?  
A king to me mine habit gave:  
At Oxford, the university,  
Advancéd I was to that degree;  
By whole consent of their senate  
I was made poet laureate.  
To call me lorell ye are too lewd:  
Lith and listen, all beshrewd!  
Of the Muses nine, Calliope  
Hath 'pointed me to rail on thee.  
It 'seemeth not thy pilléd pate  
Against a poet laureate  
To take upon thee for to scrive:  
It 'comes thee better for to drive  
A dung-cart or a tumbrel  
Than with my poems for to mell.

<sup>1</sup>harlots<sup>2</sup>tapestry.<sup>3</sup>stud.

The honour of England I learned to spell,  
 In dignity royall that doth excel:  
 Note and mark well this parcel.  
 I gave him drink of the sugared well  
 Of Helicon's waters crystalline,  
 Acquainting him with the Muses nine.  
 It 'cometh thee well me to remord<sup>1</sup>  
 That creanser<sup>2</sup> was to thy sovereign lord!  
 It pleaseth that noble prince royall  
 Me as his master for to call  
 In his learning primordiall.  
 Avaunt, ribald, thy tongue reclaim!  
 Me to behave thou art to blame.  
 Thy tongue untaught, with poison infect,  
 Without thou leave thou shalt be checked,  
 And taken up in such a frame  
 That all the world will spy your shame.  
 Avaunt, avaunt, thou sluggish . . .<sup>3</sup>  
 And say poets no dis . . .  
 It is for no bawdy knave  
 The dignity laureate for to have.

Thou callest me scalléd, thou callest me mad:  
 Though thou be pilléd, thou art not sad.  
 Thou art frantic and lackest wit  
 To rail with me that thee can hit.  
 Though it be now full-tide with thee,  
 Yet there may fall such casualtie,  
 Ere thou be ware, that in a throw  
 Thou mayest fall down and ebb full low:  
 Wherefore in wealth beware of woe,  
 For wealth will soon depart thee fro.  
 To know thyself if thou lack grace,  
 Learn or be lewd, I shrew<sup>4</sup> thy face!

Thou seest I calléd thee a peacock:  
 Thou list I calléd thee a woodcock;

<sup>1</sup>reproach.<sup>2</sup>tutor.<sup>3</sup>Dyce notes: MS. illegible.<sup>4</sup>curse

For thou hast a long snout,  
 A seemly nose and a stout,  
 Prickéd<sup>1</sup> like an unicorn:  
 I would some man's back ink-horn  
 Were thy nose spectacle-case,  
 It would garnish well thy face.

Thou deem'st my railing overthwart:  
 I rail to thee such as thou art.  
 If thou were acquainted with all  
 The famous poets satiricall,  
 As Persius and Juvenall,  
 Horace and noble Martiall,  
 If they were living this day,  
 Of thee wot I what they would say:  
 They would thee write, all with one stevin,<sup>2</sup>  
 The foulest sloven under heaven!  
 Prowd, peevish, lither, and lewd,  
 Malapert, meddler, nothing well-thewed,  
 Busy, brainless, to brawl and brag,  
 Witless, wayward, Sir Wrig-wrag!  
 Disdainous, double, full of deceit,  
 Lying, spying, by subtlety and sleight,  
 Fleering, flattering, false, and fickle,  
 Scornful and mocking over too mickle!

My time, I trow, I should but lese<sup>3</sup>  
 To write to thee of tragedies,  
 It is not meet for such a knave.  
 But now my process for to save,  
 Inordinate pride will have a fall.  
 Presumptuous pride is all thine hope:  
 God guard thee, Garnesche, from the rope!  
 Stop a tid,<sup>4</sup> and be well ware  
 Ye be not caught in an hempen snare.  
 Harken thereto, ye Harvy Hafter,  
 Pride goeth before and shame cometh after.

<sup>1</sup>pointed.<sup>2</sup>voice.<sup>3</sup>lose.<sup>4</sup>betime.

Thou writest, I should let thee go play:  
Go play thee, Garnesche, garnishéd gay.  
I care not what thou write and say,  
I cannot let<sup>1</sup> thee the knave to play,  
To dance the hay or run the ray<sup>2</sup>:  
Thy fond face cannot me fray<sup>3</sup>!  
Take this for that, bear this in mind,  
Of thy lewdness more is behind;  
A ream of paper will not hold  
Of thy lewdness that may be told.  
My study might be better spent;  
But for to serve the king's intent,  
His noble pleasure and commandment.  
Scribble thou, scribble thou, rail or write,  
Write what thou wilt, I shall thee requite!

*By the King's most noble commandment.*

<sup>1</sup>i.e. stop.

<sup>2</sup>Names of dances.

<sup>3</sup>frighten.

SKELTON LAUREATE,

Oratoris Regis,

AGAINST VENOMOUS TONGUES

ENPOISONED WITH SLANDER AND FALSE DETRACTIONS, ETC.

*Quid detur tibi, aut quid apponatur tibi ad linguam dolosam?*<sup>1</sup>

*Deus destruet te in finem; euellet te, et emigrabit te de tabernaculo tuo, et radicem tuam de terra uiuentium.*<sup>2</sup>

All matters well pondered and well to be regarded,  
How should a false lying tongue then be rewarded?  
Such tongues should be torn out by the hard roots,  
Hoigning<sup>3</sup> like hogs that groignis<sup>4</sup> and roots.

*Dilexisti omni verba praecipitationis, lingua dolosa.*<sup>5</sup>

For, as I have read in volumes old,  
A false lying tongue is hard to withhold;  
A slanderous tongue, a tongue of a scold,  
Worketh more mischief than can be told;  
That, if I wist not to be controlled,  
Yet somewhat to say I dare well be bold,  
How some delight for to lie thick and threefold.

*Ad sennam hominem redigit comice et graphice.*<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou deceitful tongue?" — Ps. cxix. 3 (Vulg.).

<sup>2</sup>"God shall destroy thee for ever; he shall take thee up, and pluck thee out of thy tent, and root thee out of the land of the living." — Ps. li. 7 (Vulg.).

<sup>3</sup>grunting.

<sup>4</sup>nuzzles.

<sup>5</sup>"Thou lovest all devouring words, O thou deceitful tongue." — Ps. li. 6 (Vulg.).

<sup>6</sup>He brings a man to mockery, derisively and cunningly.



For ye said that he said that I said – wot ye what?  
 I made, he said, a windmill of an old mat:  
 If there be none other matter but that  
 Then ye may commend me to gentle Cock-wat.

*Hic notat purpuraria arte intextas literas Romanas in amictibus  
 post ambulonum ante et retro.*<sup>1</sup>

For before on your breast, and behind on your back,  
 In Roman letters I never found lack:  
 In your cross row nor Christ cross you speed,  
 Your Paternoster, your Ave, nor your Creed.  
 Whosoever that tale unto you told,  
 He saith untruly, to say that I wold  
 Control the cognizance<sup>2</sup> of noble men  
 Either by language or with my pen.

*Paedagogium meum de sublimiori Minerva constat esse: ergo,  
 etc.*<sup>3</sup>

My school is more solemn and somewhat more hault<sup>4</sup>  
 Than to be found in any such fault.

*Paedagogium meum male sanos maledicos sibilis complosisque  
 manibus explodit, etc.*<sup>5</sup>

My schools are not for unthrifths untaught,  
 For frantic fators<sup>6</sup> half mad and half straught<sup>7</sup>;  
 But my learning is of another degree  
 To taunt them like lithrous,<sup>8</sup> lewd<sup>9</sup> as they be.

<sup>1</sup>Here he speaks in shining verse of the Roman letters, woven into their garments, vaunted before and behind (?). I suppose – those who wear their university degrees and orders embroidered on their clothes.

<sup>2</sup>crests.

<sup>3</sup>It is agreed that my school is of a loftier wisdom: therefore, etc.

<sup>4</sup>exalted.

<sup>5</sup>My school drives away with hissing and clapping of hands the scarcely sane slanderers.

<sup>6</sup>scoundrels. <sup>7</sup>half in their senses. <sup>8</sup>knaves. <sup>9</sup>ignorant, vile.

*Laxent ergo antennam elationis suae inflatam vento vanitatis.*<sup>1</sup>

For though some be lithrous, and list for to rail,  
Yet to lie upon me they cannot prevail:  
Then let them vale a bonet<sup>2</sup> of their proud sail,  
And of their taunting toys rest with ill-hail.

*Nobilitati ignobilis cedat vilitas, etc.*<sup>3</sup>

There is no nobleman will judge in me  
Any such folly to rest or to be:  
I care much the less whatever they say,  
For tongues untied be running astray;  
But yet I may say safely, so many well-lettered,  
Embroidered, enlaced together, and fettered,<sup>4</sup>  
And so little learning, so lewdly allowed,  
What fault find ye herein but may be avowed?  
But ye are so full of vertibility,<sup>5</sup>  
And of frantic folability,<sup>6</sup>  
And of melancholy mutability,  
That ye would coarct and enforce me  
Nothing to write, but hay de guy of three,<sup>7</sup>  
And I to suffer you lewdly to lie  
Of me with your language full of villany!

*Sicut novacula acuta fecisti dolum.*<sup>8</sup>

Malicious tongues, though they have no bones,  
Are sharper than swords, sturdier than stones.

*Lege Philostratum de vita Tyanaei Apollonii.*<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Therefore let them slacken the sail-yard of their elation blown out with the wind of vanity.

<sup>2</sup>lower one of the smaller sails.

<sup>3</sup>Let base vileness yield to nobility.

<sup>4</sup>wearing their degrees, as before (?). <sup>5</sup>variableness. <sup>6</sup>folly.

<sup>7</sup>i.e. dance heydegues. But here, evidently, it means "ballads."

<sup>8</sup>"Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully." - Ps. li. 4 (Vulg.).

<sup>9</sup>Read Philostratus concerning the life of Apollonius of Tyana.

Sharper than razors that shave and cut throatis.  
More stinging than scorpions that stang Pharaotis.<sup>1</sup>

*Venenum aspidum sub labiis eorum.*<sup>2</sup>

More venomous and much more virulent  
Than any poisoned toad or any serpent.

*Quid peregrinis egemus exemplis? – ad domestica recurramus.*<sup>3</sup>

Such tongues unhappy hath made great division  
In realms, in cities, by such false abuson;  
Of false fickle tongues such cloaked collusion  
Hath brought noble princes to extreme confusion.

*Quiquid loquantur, ut effoeminantur, ita effantur, etc.*<sup>4</sup>

Sometime women were put in great blame,  
Men said they could not their tongues atame;  
But men take upon them now all the shame,  
With scolding and slanderer make their tongues lame

*Novarum rerum cupidissimi, captatores, delatores, adulatores,  
invigilatores, deliratores, etc.*<sup>5</sup>

For men be now tratlers and tellers of tales:  
What tidings at Totnam, what newis in Wales,  
What shipis are sailing to Scaldis Malis?<sup>6</sup>  
And all is not worth a couple of nut-shellis:  
But leering and lurking here and there like spies –  
The devil tear their tongues and pick out their eyes!  
Then run they with lesings<sup>7</sup> and blow them about,  
With "He wrote such a bill<sup>8</sup> withouten doubt!"

<sup>1</sup>Pharaoh (?).      <sup>2</sup>The poison of vipers beneath their lips.

<sup>3</sup>Why do we need foreign examples? – let us revert to our own country.

<sup>4</sup>Whatever they say, they chatter as if they were women.

<sup>5</sup>Greedy of novelty, legacy-hunters, informers, flatterers, spies.

<sup>6</sup>Cadiz.

<sup>7</sup>falsehoods.

<sup>8</sup>letter.

With "I can tell you what such a man said –  
An you knew all, ye would be ill-apayed."

*De more vulpino, gannientes ad aurem, fictas fabellas fabricant.*<sup>1</sup>

*Inauspicatum, male ominatum, infortunatum se fateatur  
habuisse horoscupum, quicumque maledixerit vati Pierio,  
Skeltonidi Laureato, etc.*<sup>2</sup>

But if that I knew what his name hight,  
For clattering of me I would him soon quite;  
For his false lying, of that I spake never,  
I could make him shortly repent him for ever:  
Although he made it never so tough,  
He might be sure to have shame enough.

*Cerbus horrendo barathri latrando sub antro  
Te rodatque voret, lingua dolosa, precor.*<sup>3</sup>

A false double tongue is more fierce and fell  
Than Cerebus the cur couching in the kennel of hell;  
Whereof hereafter I think for to write,  
Of false double tongues in the despite.

*Recipit se scripturum opus sanctum, laudabile, asseptabile,  
memorableque, et nimis honorificandum.*<sup>4</sup>

*Disperdat Dominus universa labia dolosa et linguam magni-  
loquam!*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Wolfishly, snarling in the ear, they frame their false fables.

<sup>2</sup>Whoever shall have spoken ill of the Pierian poet, Skelton Laureate, let him confess that he has had an inauspicious, ill-omened horoscope.

<sup>3</sup>I pray that Cerebus, with horrid barking beneath the cave of the abyss, may bite you and devour you, deceitful tongue.

<sup>4</sup>He undertakes to write a book holy, laudable, acceptable, memorable and altogether honourable.

<sup>5</sup>May God destroy all deceitful lips and boasting tongues!

## RECULE AGAINST GAGUIN<sup>1</sup>

*Gaguinus orator Gallus contra Anglos.*

*Stamus tum crebris frustra contentibus Anglos, etc.*

How darest thou swear, or be so bold also,  
To blaspheme him that is very rete<sup>2</sup> and kind,  
And pull his arms his patron's body fro?  
Alas, what unkindness is in thy mind  
If thou were to thy earthly king so unkind?  
Thou should'st be drawn and hangéd by the chin  
As traitor horrible, though thou were next<sup>3</sup> of his kin.

<sup>1</sup>Referred to in *Garland of Laurel*. Discovered by Brie among the MSS. at Trinity College, Cambridge (o. 2. 53, fol. 165-6), and printed by him in his *Skelton-Studien*. *Recule* is properly a collection of writings. Skelton again refers to "Maister Gaguin, the chronicler," in *Why Come Ye Not to Court?*

<sup>2</sup>right(?).

<sup>3</sup>nearest.

## THE MANNER OF THE WORLD NOWADAYS<sup>1</sup>

So many pointed caps  
Laced with double flaps,  
And so gay felted hats,  
Saw I never:  
So many good lessons,  
So many good sermons,  
And so few devotions,  
Saw I never.

So many gardès<sup>2</sup> worn,  
Jagged and all to-torn,  
And so many falsely forsworn,  
Saw I never:  
So few good policies  
In townès and cities  
For keeping of blind hostries,<sup>3</sup>  
Saw I never.

So many good workès,<sup>4</sup>  
So few well-learnéd clerkès,  
And so few that goodness markès,  
Saw I never:

<sup>1</sup>Collated with Sloane MS. 747, fol. 88. After including it in his text, Dyce suspected the genuineness of this poem. "It may, after all, be Skelton's," he adds, "but at any rate it is only a *rifacimento* of the verses found in the Sloane MS." Nevertheless, it seems to me to have a Skeltonian ring, and I have included it, not only for its own merits, but for the parallel it affords with certain passages of *Colin Clout*, and the last pages of *Speak, Parrot*, where the refrain, "Since Dewcalion's flood was never," etc., is something similar.

<sup>2</sup>trimmings.

<sup>3</sup>inns.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. books.

Such prankéd coats and sleeves,  
So few young men that preves,<sup>1</sup>  
And such increase of thieves,  
Saw I never.

So many garded hose,  
Such pointed shoes,  
And so many envious foes,  
Saw I never:  
So many inquests sit  
With men of smalé wit,  
And so many falsely quit,  
Saw I never.

So many gay swordés,  
So many altered wordés,  
And so few covered boardés,  
Saw I never:  
So many empty purses,  
So few good horses,  
And so many curses,  
Saw I never.

Such boasters and braggers,  
So new fashioned daggers,  
And so many beggers,  
Saw I never:  
So many proper knives,  
So well apparelled wives  
And so ill of their lives,  
Saw I never.

So many cuckold-makers,  
So many crakers,<sup>2</sup>  
And so many peace-breakers,  
Saw I never:

<sup>1</sup>turn out well.

<sup>2</sup>boasters.

## MINOR SATIRES

So much vain clothing  
With cutting and jaggings,  
And so much bragging,  
Saw I never.

So many newés and knackés,  
So many naughty packés,<sup>1</sup>  
And so many that money lackés,  
Saw I never:  
So many maidens with child  
And wilfully beguiled,  
And so many places untiled,  
Saw I never.

So many women blaméd  
And righteously defaméd,  
And so little ashaméd,  
Saw I never:  
Widows so soon wed  
After their husbands be dead,  
Having such haste to bed,  
Saw I never.

So much striving  
For goodés and for wiving,  
And so little thriving,  
Saw I never:  
So many capacities,  
Offices and pluralities,  
And changing of dignities,  
Saw I never.

So many laws to use  
The truth to refuse,  
Such falsehood to excuse,  
Saw I never:

<sup>1</sup>knaves.



Executors having the ware,  
Taking so little care  
How the soul doth fare,  
Saw I never.

Among them that are rich,  
Where friendship is to seche,<sup>1</sup>  
Such fair glosing speech,  
Saw I never:  
So many poor  
Coming to the door,  
And so small succour,  
Saw I never.

So proud and so gay,  
So rich in array,  
And so scant of money,  
Saw I never:  
So many bowyers,<sup>2</sup>  
So many fletchers,<sup>3</sup>  
And so few good archers,  
Saw I never.

So many cheepers,<sup>4</sup>  
So few buyers,  
And so many borrowers,  
Saw I never:  
So many ale-sellers  
In bawdy holes and cellars,  
Of young folks ill-councillors,  
Saw I never.

So many pinkers,  
So many thinkers,  
And so many good ale-drinkers,  
Saw I never:

<sup>1</sup>i.e. to seek, to be looked for.

<sup>2</sup>arrow-makers.

<sup>3</sup>bow-makers.

<sup>4</sup>sellers.

## MINOR SATIRES

So many wrongs,  
 So few merry songs,  
 And so many ill tongues,  
 Saw I never.

So many a vagabond  
 Through all this lond,  
 And so many in prison bond,  
 I saw never:  
 So many citations,  
 So few oblations,  
 And so many new fashions,  
 Saw I never.

So many flying tales,  
 Pickers of purses and males,<sup>1</sup>  
 And so many sales,  
 Saw I never:  
 So much preaching,  
 Speaking fair and teaching,  
 And so ill believing,  
 Saw I never.

So much wrath and envy,  
 Covetous and gluttony,  
 And so little charity,  
 Saw I never:  
 So many carders,  
 Revellers and dicers,  
 And so many ill-ticers,<sup>2</sup>  
 Saw I never.

So many lollers,<sup>3</sup>  
 So few true tollers,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>wallets.

<sup>2</sup>evil-enticers.

<sup>3</sup>heretics.

<sup>4</sup>tellers, preachers.

So many bawds and pollers,<sup>1</sup>

Saw I never:

Such treachery,

Simony and usury,

Poverty and lechery,

Saw I never.

So many cloisters closéd,

And priests at large looséd,

Being so evil-disposéd,

Saw I never:

God save our sovereign lord the King,

And all his royal spring,

For so noble a prince reigning,

Saw I never.

So many Easterlings,

Lombards and Flemings,

To bear away our winnings,

Saw I never:

By their subtle ways

All England decays,

For such false Januays,<sup>2</sup>

Saw I never.

Sometime we sang of mirth and play,

But now our joy is gone away,

For so many fall in decay,

Saw I never:

Whither is the wealth of England gone?

The spiritual saith they have none,

And so many wrongfully undone,

Saw I never.

It is great pity that every day

So many bribers go by the way,

<sup>1</sup>plunderers.

<sup>2</sup>Genoese.

And so many extortioners in each countrey,  
Saw I never:  
To thee, Lord, I make my moan,  
For thou may'st help us every one:  
Alas, the people is so woe-begone,  
Worse was it never!

Amendment  
Were convenient,  
But it may not be:  
We have exiled veritie.  
God is neither dead nor sick;  
He may amend all yet,  
And trow ye so indeed,  
As ye believe ye shall have mede.  
After better I hope ever,  
For worse was it never.

*Finis.* J. S.

*Hereafter followeth the Book entitled*

WARE THE HAWK

*Per Skelton, Laureate*

*Prologus Skeltonidis Leareati Super Ware the Hawk*

This work deviséd is  
For such as do amiss;  
And specially to control  
Such as have cure of soul,  
That be so far abused<sup>1</sup>  
They cannot be excused  
By reason nor by law;  
But that they play the daw,<sup>2</sup>  
To hawk, or else to hunt  
From the alter to the font,  
With cry unreverent,  
Before the sacrament,  
Within the holy church's boundis,  
That of our faith the ground is.  
That priest that hawkis so  
All grace is far him fro;  
He seemeth a schismatic,  
Or else an heretic,  
For faith in him is faint.  
Therefore to make complaint  
Of such misadviséd  
Parsons and disguised,<sup>3</sup>  
This book we have deviséd,  
Compendiously comprisé,

<sup>1</sup>depraved,

<sup>2</sup>i.e. play the fool

<sup>3</sup>guilty of unbecoming conduct.

## MINOR SATIRES

No good priest to offend,  
 But such daws to amend,  
 In hope that no man shall  
 Be miscontent withall.

I shall make you relation,  
 By way of apostrophation,  
 Under supportation  
 Of your patient toleration,  
 How I, Skelton Laureate,  
 Devised and also wrate  
 Upon a lewd curate,  
 A parson beneficed,  
 But nothing well advised:  
 He shall be as now nameless,  
 But he shall not be blameless,  
 Nor he shall not be shameless;  
 For sure he wrought amiss  
 To hawk in my church at Diss.  
 This fond frantic falconer,  
 With his polluted pawtener,<sup>1</sup>  
 As priest unreverent,  
 Straight to the sacrament  
 He made his hawk to fly,  
 With hugeous shout and cry.  
 The high alter he stripped naked;  
 Thereon he stood and crakéd<sup>2</sup>;  
 He shook down all the clothes,  
 And sware horrible oaths  
 Before the face of God,  
 By Moses and Aaron's rod,  
 Ere that he hence yede<sup>3</sup>  
 His hawk should pray and feed  
 Upon a pigeon's maw.  
 The blood ran down raw  
 Upon the alter-stone;

<sup>1</sup>scrip.<sup>2</sup>vaunted.<sup>3</sup>went.

The hawk tiréd on a bone;  
 And in the holy place  
 She dungéd there a chace<sup>1</sup>  
 Upon my corporas' face.<sup>2</sup>  
 Such *sacrificium laudis*<sup>3</sup>  
 He made with such gambawdis.<sup>4</sup>

## OBSERVATE

His second hawk waxed gery,<sup>5</sup>  
 And was with flying weary;  
 She had flowen so oft,  
 That on the rood-loft<sup>6</sup>  
 She perchéd her to rest.  
 The falconer then was prest,<sup>7</sup>  
 Came running with a dow,<sup>8</sup>  
 And cried "Stow, stow, stow!"<sup>9</sup>  
 But she would not bow.  
 He then, to be sure,  
 Called her with a lure.<sup>10</sup>  
 Her meat was very crude,  
 She had not well endued<sup>11</sup>;  
 She was not clean ensaiméd,<sup>12</sup>  
 She was not well reclaimed<sup>13</sup>;  
 But the falconer unfainéd<sup>14</sup>  
 Was much more feeblér brainéd.  
 The hawk had no list<sup>15</sup>  
 To come to his fist;  
 She looked as she had the frounce<sup>16</sup>;

<sup>1</sup>a spot.    <sup>2</sup>the communion-cloth that covers the bread, or body.

<sup>3</sup>sacrifice of praise.    <sup>4</sup>lewd gambols.    <sup>5</sup>giddy.

<sup>6</sup>a loft or niche where stood a crucifixion wit hfigures of the Virgin and St. John.

<sup>7</sup>ready.    <sup>8</sup>pigeon.    <sup>9</sup>i.e. called her back to his fist.

<sup>10</sup>an imitation bird made of feathers and leather.    •

<sup>11</sup>digested.    <sup>12</sup>purged of grease.

<sup>13</sup>sufficiently tame to return to hand.    <sup>14</sup>displeased.

<sup>15</sup>no wish.    <sup>16</sup>an hawk's distemper.

## MINOR SATIRES

With that he gave her a bounce  
 Full upon the gorge.<sup>1</sup>  
 I will not feign nor forge –  
 The hawk with that clap  
 Fell down with evil hap.  
 The church doors were sparréd,  
 Fast bolted and barréd,  
 Yet with a pretty gin<sup>2</sup>  
 I fortunéd to come in,  
 This rebel to behold,  
 Whereof I him controll'd.  
 But he said that he wold,  
 Against my mind and will,  
 In my church hawk still.

## CONSIDERATE

On Saint John decollation<sup>3</sup>  
 He hawkéd in this fashion,  
*Tempore vesperarum,*  
*Sed non secundum Sarum,*<sup>4</sup>  
 But like a March harum  
 His brainès were so *parum*.  
 He said he would not let<sup>5</sup>  
 His houndis for to fet,<sup>6</sup>  
 To hunt there by liberty  
 In the despite of me,  
 And to halloo there the fox:  
 Down went my offering-box,  
 Book, bell, and candle,  
 All that he might handle!  
 Cross, staff, lectern, and banner,  
 Fell down in this manner.

<sup>1</sup>i.e. the crop.<sup>2</sup>contrivance.<sup>3</sup>On the festival of the beheading of St. John.<sup>4</sup>At the time of vespers, but not according to Sarum; i.e. not according to precedent – the original Ordinal made by Osmond, Bishop of Sarum in 1090.<sup>5</sup>stop.<sup>6</sup>fetch.



## DELIBERATE

With troll, citrace, and trovy,<sup>1</sup>  
 They rangéd, Hankin Bovy,<sup>2</sup>  
 My church all about.  
 This falconer then gan shout,  
 "These be my gossellers,<sup>3</sup>  
 These be my epistlers,<sup>4</sup>  
 These be my choristers  
 To help me to sing,  
 My hawks to matins ring!"  
 In this priestly gyding<sup>5</sup>  
 His hawk then flew upon  
 The rood with Mary and John.  
 Dealt he not like a fon<sup>6</sup>?  
 Dealt he not like a daw?  
 Or else is this God's law,  
 Decrees or decretals,  
 Or holy sinodals,  
 Or else provincials,  
 Thus within the walls  
 Of holy church to deal,  
 Thus to ring a peal  
 With his hawkis bells?  
 Doubtless such losells<sup>7</sup>  
 Make the church to be  
 In small authoritie:  
 A curate in speciall  
 To snapper<sup>8</sup> and to fall  
 Into this open crime:  
 To look on this were time

<sup>1</sup>i.e. with skips, capers, etc.<sup>2</sup>A dance properly called Hankin Booby.<sup>3</sup>that sing the Gospel.<sup>4</sup>that sing the mass.<sup>5</sup>behaviour.<sup>6</sup>fool.<sup>7</sup>knaves.<sup>8</sup>stumble.

## VIGILATE

But whoso that looks  
 In the official books,  
 There he may see and read  
 That this is matter indeed.  
 Howbeit, maiden Meed  
 Made them to be agreed,  
 And so the Scribe was feed,  
 And the Pharisey  
 Then durst nothing say,  
 But let the matter slip,  
 And made truth to trip;  
 And of the spiritual law  
 They made but a gewgaw,  
 And took it out in drink,  
 And thus the cause doth shrink:  
 The church is thus abuséd,  
 Reproachéd and polluted,  
 Correction hath no place,  
 And all for lack of grace

## DEPLORATE

Look now in *Exodi*<sup>1</sup>  
 And *de arca Domini*,<sup>2</sup>  
 With *Regum*<sup>3</sup> by and by  
 (The Bible will not lie)  
 How the Temple was kept,  
 How the Temple was swept,  
 Where *sanguis taurorum*,<sup>4</sup>  
 Aut *sanguis vitulorum*,<sup>5</sup>  
 Was offered within the walls,  
 After ceremonials;  
 When it was polluted  
 Sentence was executed,

<sup>1</sup>Exodus.<sup>2</sup>concerning the Ark of the Lord.<sup>3</sup>Kings.<sup>4</sup>blood of bulls.<sup>5</sup>Or blood of calves.

By way of expiation  
For reconciliation.

## DEVINATE

Then much more, by the rood,  
Where Christis precious blood  
Daily offered is,  
To be polluted this<sup>1</sup>;  
And that he wished withall  
That the dove's dung might fall  
Into my chalice at mass,  
When consecrated was  
The blessed sacrament.  
O priest unreverent!  
He said that he would hunt  
From the alter to the font.

## REFORMATE

Of no tyrant I read  
That so far did exceed,  
Neither Dioclesian,  
Nor yet Domitian,  
Nor yet crooked Cacus,<sup>2</sup>  
Nor yet drunken Bacchus;  
Neither Olibrius,<sup>3</sup>  
Nor Dionysus,  
Neither Phalaris<sup>4</sup>  
Rehearsed in Valery<sup>5</sup>;  
Nor Sardanapall,  
Unhappiest of all;  
Nor Nero the worst,

<sup>1</sup>thus.

<sup>2</sup>A cruel giant who ruled in Carthage. See Caxton's *Recuyel of the Historyes of Troy*.

<sup>3</sup>Who tortured and beheaded St. Margaret at Antioch.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. Phalaris.

<sup>5</sup>recorded in Valerius Maximus.

Nor Claudius the curst;  
 Nor yet Egeas,  
 Nor yet Sir Ferumbras<sup>1</sup>;  
 Neither Zorobabell,  
 Nor cruel Jezebell;  
 Nor yet Tarquinius,  
 Whom Titus Livius  
 In writing doth enroll;  
 I have read them poll by poll<sup>2</sup>;  
 The story of Aristobell,<sup>3</sup>  
 And of Constantinopell,  
 Which city miscreants wan  
 And slew many a Christian man;  
 Yet the Soldan, nor the Turk,  
 Wrought never such a work,  
 For to let their hawkès fly  
 In the Church of Saint Sophy;  
 With much matter more,  
 That I keep in store.

## PENSITATE

Then in a table plain  
 I wrote a verse or twain,  
 Whereat he made disdain:  
 The peckish parson's brain  
 Could not reach nor attain  
 What the sentence meant.  
 He said, for a crooked intent,  
 The wordès were perverted:  
 And thus he overthwarted.<sup>4</sup>  
 Of the which process

<sup>1</sup>Saracen giant vanquished by Oliver.

<sup>2</sup>head by head, one by one.

<sup>3</sup>Aristobulus, high-priest and governor of Judaea, who starved his mother to death and assassinated his brother.

<sup>4</sup>boasted.

Ye may know more express  
If it please you to look  
In the residue of this book.

*Hereafter followeth the table.*

Look on this table,  
Whether thou art able  
To read or to spell  
What these verses tell.

*Sicculo luteris est colo buraara  
Nixphedras visarum caniuter tuntantes  
Raterplas Natanbrian umsudus itnugenus.  
18. 10. 2. 11. 19. 4. 13. 3. 3. 1. ten valet.  
Chartula stet, precor, haec nullo temeranda petulco:  
Hos rapiet numeros non homo, sed mala bos.  
Ex parte rem chartae adverte asperte, pone Musam Arethusam  
hanc.<sup>1</sup>*

Where to should I rehearse  
The sentence<sup>2</sup> of my verse?  
In them be no schools  
For brain-sick frantic fools:  
*Construas hoc,*<sup>3</sup>  
*Domine* Dawcock<sup>4</sup>!  
Ware the hawk!  
Maister *sophista*,<sup>5</sup>  
Ye *simplex syllogista*,<sup>6</sup>  
Ye devilish *dogmatista*,<sup>7</sup>  
Your hawk on your fista,  
To hawk when you lista<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dyce notes: "The meaning of this 'table plain' is quite beyond my comprehension." It is a cryptogram to which the key has been lost.

<sup>2</sup>meaning

<sup>3</sup>construe thou this.

<sup>4</sup>Master Dunce.

<sup>5</sup>sophist.

<sup>6</sup>foolish syllogiser.

<sup>7</sup>dogmatist.

<sup>8</sup>when you like.

*In ecclesia ista,*  
*Domine concupisti,*<sup>1</sup>  
 With thy hawk on they fisty?  
*Nunquid sic dixisti?*  
*Nunquid sic fecisti?*  
*Sed ubi hoc legisti,*  
*Aut unde hoc,*<sup>2</sup>  
 Doctor Dawcock?  
 Ware the hawk!  
 Doctor *Dialetica,*<sup>3</sup>  
 Where find you in *Hypothetica,*<sup>4</sup>  
 Or in *Categoria,*<sup>5</sup>  
*Latina sive Dorica,*<sup>6</sup>  
 To use your hawkis *forica*<sup>7</sup>  
*In propitiatorio,*  
*Tanquam diversorio*<sup>8</sup>?  
*Unde hoc,*  
 Doctor Dawcock?  
 Ware the hawk!  
 Say to me, Jack Haris,  
*Quare aucuparis*  
*Ad sacramentum altaris?*<sup>9</sup>  
 For no reverence thou sparis  
 To shake thy pigeon's feaderis<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In this church,  
 Master, you have desired.

<sup>2</sup>Did you never say so?  
 Did you never act so?  
 But where did you gather that,  
 Or whence this?

<sup>3</sup>Dr. Logician.      <sup>4</sup>Hypotheses.      <sup>5</sup>Categories.

<sup>6</sup>In Latin or in Greek.      <sup>7</sup>lavatory.

<sup>8</sup>In the propitiatory,  
 As if it were in the tavern.

<sup>9</sup>Why do you go bird-catching  
 By the sacrament of the altar?

<sup>10</sup>feathers.

*Super arcam foederis*<sup>1</sup>:  
*Unde hoc,*  
 Doctor Dawcock?  
     Ware the hawk!  
*Sir Dominus vobiscum,*<sup>2</sup>  
*Per aucupium*<sup>3</sup>  
 Ye made your hawk to come  
*Desuper candelabrum*  
*Christi Crucifixi*<sup>4</sup>  
 To feed upon your fisty:  
*Dic, inimice crucis Christi,*  
*Ubi didicisti*  
*Facere hoc,*<sup>5</sup>  
 Domine Dawcock?  
     Ware the hawk!  
 Apostata Julianus,  
 Nor yet Nestorianus,<sup>6</sup>  
 Thou shalt nowhere read  
 That they did such a deed,  
 To let their hawkès fly  
*Ad ostium tabernaculi,*  
*In que est corpus Domine:*  
*Cave hoc,*<sup>7</sup>  
 Doctor Dawcock!  
     Ware the hawk!

<sup>1</sup>Over the Ark of the Covenant.

<sup>2</sup>cant term for priest.

<sup>3</sup>By fowling.

<sup>4</sup>From above the candlesticks  
Of Christ's crucifixion.

<sup>5</sup>Say, enemy of Christ's cross,  
Where did you learn  
To do this?

<sup>6</sup>Nestorius.

<sup>7</sup>Even to the door of the tabernacle,  
Where the body of the Lord is:  
Ware this!

Thus doubtless ye ravéd,  
 Diss church ye thus depravéd;  
 Wherefore, as I be savéd,  
 Ye are therefore beknavéd:

*Quare? quia Evangelia,  
 Concha et conchyliæ,  
 Accipiter et sonalia,  
 Et bruta animalia,  
 Caetera quoque talia  
 Tibi sunt aequalia*<sup>1</sup>:  
*Unde hoc,*

Domine Dawcock?  
 Ware the hawk!

*Et relis et ralis,  
 Et reliqualis,*  
 From Granada to Galis,<sup>2</sup>  
 From Winchelsea to Walès,  
*Non est* brain-sick talès,  
*Nec minus rationalis,*  
*Nec magis bestialis,*<sup>3</sup>  
 That sings with a chalice:  
*Construas hoc,*  
 Doctor Dawcock!

Ware the hawk!  
 Mazéd, witless, smery smith,  
 Hampar with thy hammer upon thy stith,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Why? because the Gospels,  
 Holy shells [i.e. shells that were numbered among the sacred  
 vessels of the church] and shell-fish,  
 A hawk and bells [i.e. attached to the bird's feet],  
 And brutish animals,  
 And other such things  
 Are all alike to you.

<sup>2</sup>Galicía.

<sup>3</sup>Nor less reasonable,  
 Nor more bestial.

<sup>4</sup>anvil.



And make there of a sickle or a saw,  
For though ye live a hundred year, ye shall  
die a daw.

*Vos valetē,*<sup>1</sup>

*Doctor indiscrete!*

<sup>1</sup>Fare thou well.

## AGAINST THE SCOTS

### *Skelton Laureate Against the Scots*

Against the proud Scots clattering,  
That never will leave their tratling:  
Won they the field, and lost their king?  
They may well say, Fie on that winning!

Lo, these fond sots  
And tratling Scots,  
How they are blind  
In their own mind,  
And will not know  
Their overthrow  
At Brankston Moor!  
They are so stour,<sup>1</sup>  
So frantic mad,  
They say they had  
And won the field  
With spear and shield:  
That is as true  
As black is blue  
And green is gray!  
Whatever they say,  
Jemmy<sup>2</sup> is dead  
And closed in lead,  
That was their own king:  
Fie on that winning!  
At Flodden hills<sup>3</sup>  
Our bows, our bills,<sup>4</sup>  
Slew all the floure  
Of their honour.

<sup>1</sup>obstinate. <sup>2</sup>i.e. James IV. <sup>3</sup>i.e. on September 9th, 1513.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. halberds.

Are not these Scots  
 Fools and sots,  
 Such boast to make,  
 To prate and crake,  
 To face, to brace,<sup>1</sup>  
 All void of grace,  
 So proud of heart,  
 So overthwart,  
 So out of frame,  
 So void of shame,  
 As it is enrolled,  
 Written and told  
 Within this quaire?<sup>2</sup>  
 Who list to repair,  
 And therein read,  
 Shall find indeed  
 A mad reckoning,  
 Considering all thing,  
 That the Scots may sing  
 Fie on the winning!

*When the Scot Lived*

Jolly Jemmy, ye scornful Scot,  
 Is it come unto your lot  
 A solemn sumner<sup>3</sup> for to be?  
 It 'greeth nought for your degree  
 Our king of England for to cite,<sup>4</sup>  
 Your sovereign lord, our prince of might:  
 Ye for to send such a citation,  
 It shameth all your naughty nation,  
 In comparison but king Copping  
 Unto our prince, anointed king!

<sup>1</sup>vaunt . . . brag.

<sup>2</sup>book.

<sup>3</sup>summoner.

<sup>4</sup>James sent his defiance to Henry VIII while the latter was encamped before Terouenne.

Ye play Hob Lobbin of Lowdean<sup>1</sup>;  
 Ye shew right well what good ye can;  
 Ye may be lord of Locrian,<sup>2</sup> —  
 Christ cense you with a frying-pan!  
 Of Edinburgh and Saint Johnis town:<sup>3</sup>  
 Adieu, Sir Sumner, cast off your crown!

*When the Scot was Slain*

Continually I shall remember  
 The merry month of September,  
 With the ninth day of the same,  
 For then began our mirth and game;  
 So that now I have devised,  
 And in my mind I have comprised,  
 Of the proud Scot, King Jemmy,  
 To write some little tragedy,<sup>4</sup>  
 For no manner consideration  
 Of any sorrowful lamentation,  
 But for the special consolation  
 Of all our royal English nation.

Melpomene, O muse tragediall,  
 Unto your grace for grace now I call  
 To guide my pen and my pen to enbibe<sup>5</sup>!  
 Illumine me, your poet and your scribe,  
 That with mixture of aloes and bitter gall  
 I may compound confectures for a cordiall,  
 To anger the Scots and Irish keterings<sup>6</sup> withall,  
 That late were discomfect with battle martiall.

Thalia, my Muse, for you also call I,  
 To touch them with taunts of your harmony,  
 A medley to make of mirth with sadness,  
 The hearts of England to comfort with gladness!

<sup>1</sup>Lothian. — <sup>2</sup>Loch Ryan. <sup>3</sup>Perth. <sup>4</sup>i.e. tragic narrative.

<sup>5</sup>moisten.

<sup>6</sup>Highlanders and Islesmen.

And now to begin I will me address,  
To you rehearsing the sum of my process.

King Jamey, Jemmy, Jocky my jo,<sup>1</sup>  
Ye summoned our king, — why did ye so?  
To you nothing it did accord  
To summon our king, your sovereign lord.  
A king, a sumner! it was great wonder:  
Know ye not sugar and salt assunder?  
Your sumner too saucy, too malapert,  
Your herald in arms not yet half expert.  
Ye thought ye did yet valiantly,  
Not worth three skips of a pie\*!  
Sir skirgalliard, ye were so skit,<sup>2</sup>  
Your will then ran before your wit.

Your alledge ye laid and your ally,  
Your frantic fable not worth a fly,  
French king, or one or other;  
Regarded ye should your lord, your brother.<sup>4</sup>  
Trowéd ye, Sir Jemmy, his noble grace  
From you, Sir Scot, would turn his face?  
With, Gup, Sir Scot of Galloway,  
Now is your pride fall to decay!  
Male vred<sup>5</sup> was your false intent  
For to offend your president,  
Your sovereign lord most reverent,  
Your lord, your brother, and your regent.

In him is figured Melchizadek,  
And ye were disloyal Amelek.  
He is our noble Scipione,  
Annoited king; and ye were none,

<sup>1</sup>joy.

<sup>2</sup>magpie.

<sup>3</sup>hasty.

<sup>4</sup>James married Margaret, sister of Henry VIII.

<sup>5</sup>ill-fortuned.

Though ye untruly your father have slain.<sup>1</sup>  
 His title is true in France to reign<sup>2</sup>;  
 And ye, proud Scot, Dundee, Dunbar,  
 Parde, ye were his homagar,  
 And suitor to his parliament:  
 For your untruth now are ye shent.<sup>3</sup>  
 Ye bear yourself somewhat too bold,  
 Therefore ye lost your copyhold;  
 Ye were bond tentant to his estate;  
 Lost is your game, ye are check-mate.

Unto the castle of Norham,  
 I understand, too soon ye came.  
 At Brankston Moor and Flodden hills,  
 Our English bows, our English bills,  
 Against you gave so sharp a shower  
 That of Scotland ye lost the flower.  
 The White Lion,<sup>4</sup> there rampant of mood,  
 He ragéd and rent out your heart-blood;  
 He the White, and ye the Red,<sup>5</sup>  
 The White there slew the Red stark dead.  
 Thus for your guerdon quit are ye,  
 Thanked be God in Trinitie,  
 And sweet Saint George, Our Lady's knight!  
 Your eye is out: adew, good-night!

Ye were stark mad to make a fray,  
 His grace being out of the way:  
 But, by the power and might of God,  
 For your own tail ye made a rod!

<sup>1</sup>James III was murdered by an unknown hand in a cottage after his flight from the battle of Sauchie-burn, where his son (then seventeen) had appeared in arms against him. James IV was always haunted by remorse for his father's death and wore in penance an iron girdle, the weight of which he every year increased.

<sup>2</sup>Reference to Henry's pretensions to the French crown.

<sup>3</sup>destroyed. <sup>4</sup>The Earl of Surrey's badge.

<sup>5</sup>the royal arms of Scotland.

Ye wanted wit, sir, at a word;  
 Ye lost your spurs, ye lost your sword.  
 Ye might have buskéd<sup>1</sup> you to Huntley banks,  
 Your pride was peevish to play such pranks:  
 Your poverty could not attain  
 With our king royal war to maintain.

Of the king of Navarre ye might take heed,<sup>2</sup>  
 Ungraciously how he doth speed:  
 In double dealing so he did dream  
 That he is king without a ream<sup>3</sup>;  
 And, for example ye would none take,  
 Experience hath brought you in such a brake.<sup>4</sup>  
 Your wealth, your joy, your sport, your play,  
 Your bragging boast, your royal array,  
 Your beard so brim<sup>5</sup> as boar at bay,  
 Your Seven Sisters,<sup>6</sup> that gun so gay,  
 All have ye lost and cast away.  
 Thus Fortune hath turned you, I dare well say,  
 Now from a king to a clot of clay:  
 Out of your robes ye were shakéd,  
 And wretchedly ye lay stark naked.  
 For lack of grace hard was your hap:  
 The Pope's curse<sup>7</sup> gave you that clap.

Of the out isles<sup>8</sup> the rough-footed Scots,  
 We have well-eased them of the bots<sup>9</sup>:  
 The rude rank Scots, like drunken dranes,<sup>10</sup>  
 At English bows have fetched their banes.

<sup>1</sup>hied.

<sup>2</sup>A reference to Henry's letter in reply to James. See Hall's *Chronicle* (Henry VIII).

<sup>3</sup>realm.

<sup>4</sup>trap.

<sup>5</sup>fierce.

<sup>6</sup>seven huge cannons from Edinburgh Castle.

<sup>7</sup>James died excommunicated for infringing the pacification with England.

<sup>8</sup>the Hebrides.

<sup>9</sup>the worms.

<sup>10</sup>drones.

## MINOR SATIRES

It is not fitting in tower and town  
 A sumner to wear a king's crown:  
 Fortune on you therefore did frown;  
 Ye were too high, ye are cast down.  
 Sir Sumner, now where is your crown?  
 Cast off your crown, cast up your crown!  
 Sir Sumner, now ye have lost your crown.

*Quod Skelton Laureate, orator to the King's  
 most royal estate.*

*Unto Divers People That Remord<sup>1</sup> This Rhyming Against  
 The Scot Jemmy*

I am now constrained,  
 With words nothing feigned,  
 This invective to make,  
 For some peoples' sake  
 That list for to jangle  
 And waywardly to wrangle  
 Against this my making,  
 Their males<sup>2</sup> thereat shaking,  
 At it reprehending,  
 And venomously stinging,  
 Rebuking and remording,  
 And nothing according.

Cause have they none other,  
 But for that he was brother,  
 Brother unnatural  
 Unto our king royal,  
 Against whom he did fight  
 Falsely against all right,  
 Like unto that untrue rebel  
 False Cain against Abel.

<sup>1</sup>blame.

<sup>2</sup>wallets.



Whoso therat picketh mood,<sup>1</sup>  
The tokens are not good  
To be true English blood;  
For, if they understood  
His traitorly despite,  
He was a recreant knight,  
A subtle schismatic,  
Right near an heretic,  
Of grace out of the state,  
And died excommunicate.

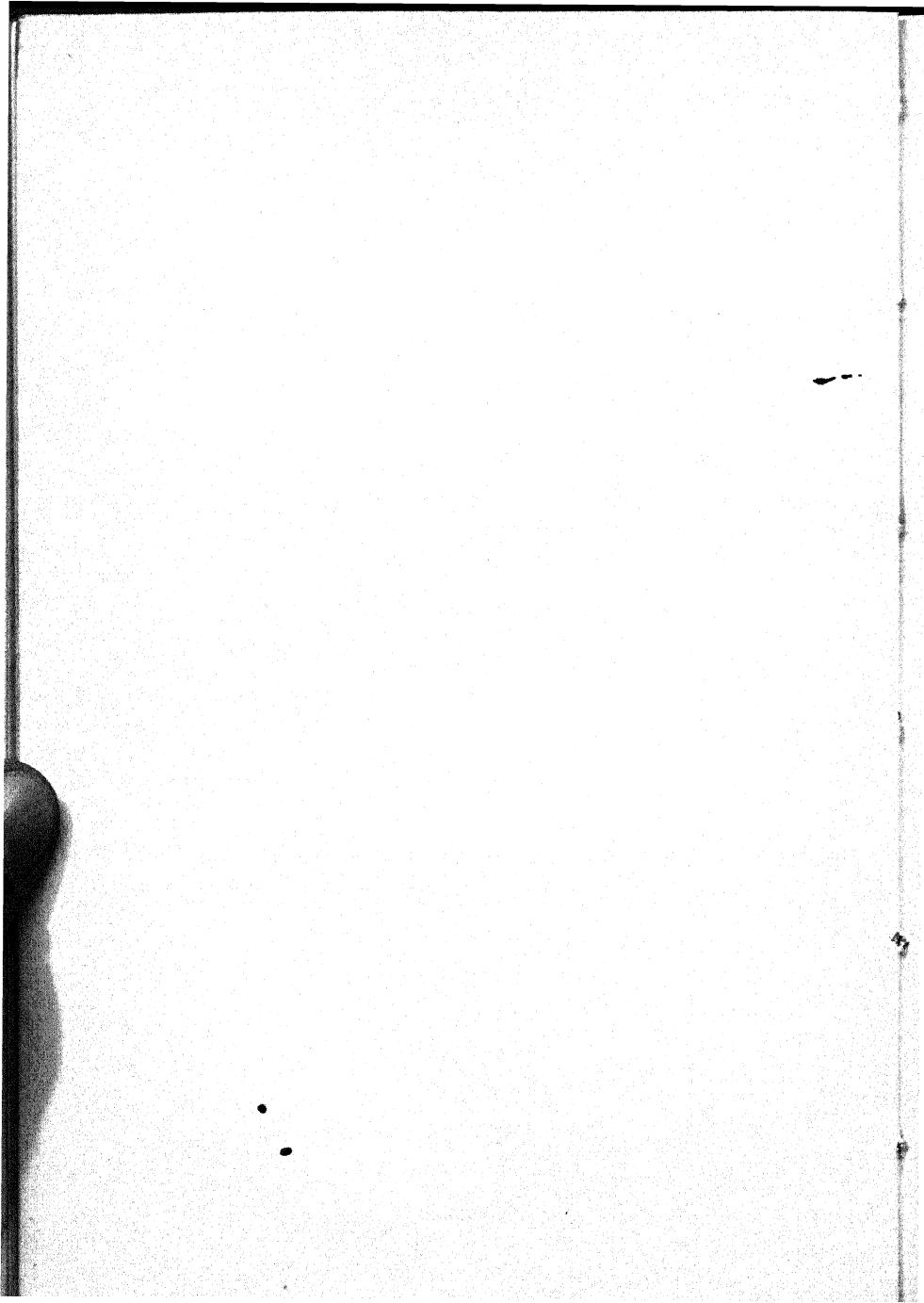
And for he was a king,  
The more shameful reckoning  
Of him should men report,  
In earnest and in sport.  
He scantly loveth our king,  
That grudgeth at this thing:  
That cast such overthwarts<sup>2</sup>  
Perchance have hollow hearts.

*Si veritatem dico, quare non creditis mihi?*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>picks a quarrel.

<sup>2</sup>cavils.

<sup>3</sup>If I speak truth, why do you not believe me?



## MAGNIFICENCE

*A Goodly Interlude and a Merry*

*Devised and Made by*

MAISTER SKELTON, POET LAUREATE

*These be the Names of the Players:*

Felicity	Folly
Liberty	Adversity
Measure	Poverty
Magnificence	Despair
Fancy	Mischief
Counterfeit Countenance	Goodhope
Crafty Conveyance	Redress
Cloaked Collusion	Sad Circumspection
Courtly Abusion	Perseverance

*Stage I. Scene I. PROSPERITY*

*Felicity.* All thing is contrived by man's reason,

The world environed of high and low estate.

Be it early or late, wealth hath a season.

Wealth is of wisdom the very true probate<sup>1</sup>;

A fool is he with wealth that falleth at debate:

But men nowadays so unhappily be vred<sup>2</sup>

That nothing than wealth may worse be endured.

To tell you the cause meseemeth no need.

The amends thereof is far to call again;

For, when men buy wealth, they have little drede

Of that may come after; experience true and plain,

How after a drought there falleth a shower of rain,

<sup>1</sup>test.

<sup>2</sup>disposed.

And after a heat oft cometh a stormy cold.  
A man may have wealth, but not as he wold,

Aye to continue and still to endure.

But if prudence be proved with sad circumspection  
Wealth might be won and made to the lure,

If nobleness were acquainted with sober direction;

But will hath reason so under subjection,  
And so disordereth this world over all,  
That wealth and felicity is passing small.

But where wonnés<sup>1</sup> wealth, an a man would weet?  
For Wealthful Felicity truly is my name.

*Stage 1. Scene 2*

*Enter LIBERTY*

*Lib.* Mary, Wealth and I was appointed to meet,  
And either I am deceived, or ye be the same.

*Fel.* Sir, as ye say, I have heard of your fame;  
Your name is Liberty, as I understand.

*Lib.* True you say, sir; give me your hand.

*Fel.* And from whence come ye, an it might be asked?

*Lib.* To tell you, sir, I dare not, lest I should be masked  
In a pair of fetters or a pair of stocks!

*Fel.* Hear you not how this gentleman mocks?

*Lib.* Yea, to mocking earnest what an it prove?

*Fel.* Why, to say what he will Liberty hath leave.

*Lib.* Yet Liberty hath been lockéd up and kept in the mew.

*Fel.* Indeed, sir, that liberty was not worth a cue<sup>2</sup>!

Howbeit, Liberty may sometime be too large,  
But if reason be regent and ruler of your barge.

*Lib.* To that ye say I can well condescend.

Shew fofth, I pray you, herein what you intend.

<sup>1</sup>dwells.

<sup>2</sup>half a farthing.

*Fel.* Of that I intend to make demonstration,  
 It asketh leisure with good advertence.  
 First, I say, we ought to have in consideration  
 That Liberty be linkéd with the chain of continence,  
 Liberty to let from all manner offence;  
 For Liberty at large is loath to be stoppéd,  
 But with continence your corage<sup>1</sup> must be croppéd.

*Lib.* Then thus to you –

*Fel.* Nay, suffer me yet further to say  
 And peradventure I shall content your mind.  
 Liberty, I wot well, forbear no man there may:  
 It is so sweet in all manner of kind.  
 Howbeit, Liberty maketh many a man blind;  
 By Liberty is done many a great excess;  
 Liberty at large will oft wax reckless.

Perceive ye this parcel<sup>2</sup>?

*Lib.* Yea, sir, passing well.  
 But an you would me permit  
 To shew part of my wit,  
 Somewhat I could infer  
 Your conceit to debar,  
 Under supportation  
 Of patient tolleration.

*Fel.* God forbid ye should be let<sup>3</sup>  
 Your reasons forth to set;  
 Wherefore at liberty.  
 Say what ye will to me.

*Lib.* Briefly to touch of my purpose the effect:  
 Liberty is laudable and privileged from law;  
 Judicial rigor shall not me correct –

*Fel.* Soft, my friend; herein your reason is but raw.

*Lib.* Yet suffer me to say the surplus of my saw.  
 What weet ye whereupon I will conclude?  
 I say there is no wealth whereas Liberty is subdued<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>inclination.

<sup>2</sup>part.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. stopped.

I trow ye cannot say nay much to this:  
To live under law it is captivity;  
Where dread leadeth the dance, there is no joy nor bliss.  
Or how can ye prove that there is felicity  
An you have not your own free liberty  
To sport at your pleasure, to run, and to hide?  
Where Liberty is absent set wealth aside!

*Stage 1. Scene 3*

*Here MEASURE comes in*

*Meas.* Christ you assist in your altercation!

*Fel.* Why, have you heard of our disputation?

*Meas.* I perceive well how each of you doth reason.

*Lib.* Maister Measure, you be come in good season.

*Meas.* And it is wonder that your wild insolence  
Can be content with Measure's presence!

*Fel.* Would it please you then –

*Lib.* Us to inform and ken –

*Meas.* Ah, ye be wondrous men!  
Your language is like the pen  
Of him that writeth too fast!

*Fel.* Sir, if any word have passed

Me, either first or last,

To you I arect it, and cast

Thereof the reformation.

*Lib.* And I of the same fashion;

Howbeit, by protestation

Displeasure that you none take;

Some reason we must make.

*Meas.* That will not I forsake,

So it in measure be.

Come off therefore, let see:

• Shall I begin, or ye?

*Fel.* Nay, ye shall begin, by my will.

*Lib.* It is reason and skill

We your pleasure fulfill.

*Meas.* Then ye must both consent

You to hold content

With my argument;

And I must you require

Me patiently to hear.

*Fel.* Yes, sir, with right good cheer.

*Lib.* With all my heart entire.

*Meas.* Horacius to record, in his volumes old,

With every condition measure must be sought.

Wealth without measure would bear himself too bold;

Liberty without measure prove a thing of nought.

I ponder by number; by measure all thing is wrought,

As at the first original, by Godly opinion:

Which proveth well that measure should have dominion.

Where measure is master, plenty doth none offence;

Where measure lacketh, all thing disorderéd is;

Where measure is absent, riot keepeth residence;

Where measure is ruler, there is nothing amiss.

Measure is treasure. How say ye, is it not this?

*Fel.* Yes, questionless, in mine opinion,

Measure is worthy to have dominion.

*Lib.* Unto that same I am right well agreed,

So that Liberty be not left behind.

*Meas.* Yea, Liberty with Measure need never drede.

*Lib.* What, Liberty to Measure then would ye bind?

*Meas.* What else? for otherwise it were against kind:

If Liberty should leap and run where he list

It were no virtue, it were a thing unblest<sup>1</sup>.

It were a mischief, if Liberty lacked a rein

Wherewith to rule him with the writhing of a wrest.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>As on a harp.

All trebles and tenors be ruléd by a mean.

Liberty without Measure is accounted for a beast;

There is no surfeit where Measure ruleth the feast;

There is no excess where Measure hath his health:

Measure continueth prosperity and wealth.

*Fel.* Unto your rule I will annex my mind.

*Lib.* So would I, but I would be loath

That wont was to be foremost now to come behind.

It were a shame, to God I make an oath,

Without I might cut it out of the broad clothe,

As I was wont ever, at my free will.

*Meas.* But have ye not heard say that will is no skill?

Take sad<sup>1</sup> direction, and leave this wantonness.

*Lib.* It is no mastery!

*Fel.* Tush, let Measure proceed,

And after his mind hardly<sup>2</sup> yourself address;

For, without Measure, Poverty and Need

Will creep upon us, and us to Mischief lead:

For Mischief will master us if Measure us forsake.

*Lib.* Well, I am content your ways to take.

*Meas.* Surely I am joyous that ye be minded thus.

Magnificence to maintain your promotion shall be.

*Fel.* So in his heart he may be glad of us.

*Lib.* There is no prince but he hath need of us three:

Wealth with Measure, and pleasant Libertie.

*Meas.* Now pleaseth you a little while to stand;

Meseemeth Magnificence is coming here at hand.

*Stage 1. Scene 4*

*Here MAGNIFICENCE comes in*

*Magn.* To assure you of my noble port and fame,

Who list to know, Magnificence I hight.

<sup>1</sup>serious.

<sup>2</sup>firmly.



But Measure, my friend, what hight this man's name?

*Meas.* Sir, though ye be a noble prince of might,  
Yet in this man you must set your whole delight.

And, sir, this other man's name is Libertie.

*Magn.* Welcome, friends, ye are both unto me.

But now let me know of your conversation.

*Fel.* Pleaseth your grace, Felicity they me call.

*Lib.* And I am Liberty, made of in every nation.

*Magn.* Convenient persons for any prince royall.

Wealth with Liberty, with me both dwell ye shall,  
To the guiding of my Measure you both committing,  
That Measure be master, us seemeth it is fitting.

*Meas.* Whereas ye have, sir, to me them assigned,

Such order I trust with them for to take  
That Wealth with Measure shall be combinéd,  
And Liberty his large with Measure shall make.

*Fel.* Your ordinance, sir, I will not forsake.

*Lib.* And I myself wholly to you will incline.

*Magn.* Then may I say that ye be servants mine,

For by Measure, I warn you, we think to be guided.

Wherein it is necessary my pleasure you know:  
Measure and I will never be divided,

For no discord that any man can sow;

For Measure is a mean, neither too high nor too low,  
In whose attemperance I have such delight  
That Measure shall never depart from my sight.

*Fel.* Laudable your conceit is to be accounted,  
For Wealth without Measure suddenly will slide.

*Lib.* As your grace full nobly recounted,  
Measure with nobleness should be allied.

*Magn.* Then, Liberty, see that Measure be your guide,  
For I will use you by this advertisement.

*Fel.* Then shall you have with you Prosperity resident.

*Meas.* I trow Good Fortune hath annexed us together,  
 To see how agreeable we are of one mind;  
 There is no flatterer, nor a losel so lither,<sup>1</sup>  
 This linkéd chain of love that can unbind.  
 Now that ye have me chief ruler assigned,  
 I will endeavour me to order every thing  
 Your nobleness and honour conserving.

*Lib.* In joy and mirth your mind shall be enlargéd,  
 And not embracéd with pusillanimitie:  
 But plenary all thought from you must be dischargéd,  
 If ye list to live after your free Libertie.  
 All delectations acquainted is with me.  
 By me all persons worké what they list.  
*Meas.* Hem, sir, yet beware of "Had I wist!"

Liberty in some cause becometh a gentle mind,  
 By cause of Measure, if I be in the way:  
 Who counteth without me is cast too far behind  
 Of reckoning, as evidently we may  
 See at our eye the worldé day by day.  
 For default of Measure all thing doth exceed.  
*Fel.* All that ye say is as true as the Creed.

For howbeit, Liberty to Wealth is convenient,  
 And from Felicity may not be forborn,  
 Yet Measure hath been so long from us absent  
 That all men laugh at Liberty to scorn.  
 Wealth and wit, I say, be so thread-bare worn  
 That all is without Measure and far beyond the mone.<sup>2</sup>  
*Magn.* Then nobleness, I see well, it almost undone.

But if thereof the sooner amends be made,  
 For doubtless I perceive my magnificence  
 Without Measure lightly may fade,  
 Of too much Liberty under the offence:  
 Wherefore, Measure, take Liberty with you hence,

<sup>1</sup>scoundrel so wicked.<sup>2</sup>moon.

And rule him after the rule of your school.

*Lib.* What, sir, would ye make me a popping fool?<sup>1</sup>

*Meas.* Why, were not yourself agreed to the same,

And now would ye swerve from your own ordinance?

*Lib.* I would be ruléd, an I might for shame!

*Fel.* Ah, ye make me laugh at your inconstance!

*Magn.* Sir, without any longer dalliance,

Take Liberty to rule, and follow mine intent.

*Meas.* It shall be done at your commandment.

[*Exit MEASURE with LIBERTY.*]

*Stage 1. Scene 5*

*Magn.* It is a wanton thing, this Libertie!

Perceive you not how loth he was to abide

The rule of Measure, notwithstanding we

Have deputed Measure him to guide?

By Measure each thing duly is tried.

Think you not thus, my friend Felicitie?

*Fel.* God forbid that it otherwise should be!

*Magn.* Ye could not else, I wot, with me endure.<sup>2</sup>

*Fel.* Endure? No, God wot, it were great pain!

But if I were orderéd by just Measure

It were not possible me long to retain.

*Stage 1. Scene 6*

*Enter FANCY*

*Fan.* Tush, hold your peace, your language is vain.

Please it, your grace, to take no disdain,

To shew you plainly the truth as I think.

*Magn.* Here is none forseth<sup>3</sup> whether you float or<sup>2</sup> sink!

<sup>1</sup>i.e. like a parrot.

<sup>2</sup>remain.

<sup>3</sup>careth.

*Fel.* From whence come you, sir, that no man lookéd after?

*Magn.* Or who made you so bold to interrupt my tale?

*Fan.* Now, *benedicite*, ye ween I were some hafter,<sup>1</sup>

Or else some jangling Jack of the Vale;

Ye ween that I am drunken, because I look pale.

*Magn.* Meseemeth that ye have drunken more than ye have bled.

*Fan.* Yet among noblemen I was brought up and bred.

*Fel.* Now leave this jangling and to us expound

Why that ye said our language was in vain.

*Fan.* Mary, upon a truth my reason I ground,

That without Largesse Nobleness cannot reign:

And that I said once yet I say again.

I say, without Largesse worship hath no place,

For Largesse is a purchaser of pardon and of grace.

*Magn.* Now, I beseech thee, tell me what is thy name?

*Fan.* Largesse, that lords should love, sir, I hight.

*Fel.* But high ye Largesse, increase of noble fame?

*Fan.* Yea, sir, undoubted.

*Fel.*

Then of very right

With Magnificence, this noble prince of might,

Should be your dwelling, in my consideration.

*Magn.* Yet we will therein take good deliberation.

*Fan.* As in that, I will not be against your pleasure.

*Fel.* Sir, hardly remember what may your name advance.

*Magn.* Largesse is laudable, so it be in measure.

*Fan.* Largesse is he that all princes doth advance.

I report me herein to King Lewis of France.<sup>2</sup>

*Fel.* Why have ye him named and all other refused?

*Fan.* For, sith he died, Largesse was little used.

<sup>1</sup>some "twister."

<sup>2</sup>Louis XII.

Pluck up your mind, sir; what ails you to muse?

Have ye not Wealth here at your will?

It is but a madding, these ways that ye use:

What availeth Lordship, yourself for to kill

With care and thought how Jack shall have Jill?

*Magn.* What? I have espied ye are a careless page.

*Fan.* By God, sir, ye see but few wise men of mine age!

~ But Covertise hath blowen you so full of wind

That *colica passio* hath gropéd you by the guts.

*Fel.* In faith, Brother Largesse, you have a merry mind!

*Fan.* In faith, I set not by the world two Doncaster cuts!

*Magn.* Ye want but a wild flying bolt to shoot at the  
butts!

Though Largesse ye hight, your language is too large:

For which end goeth forward ye take little charge!

*Fel.* Let see, this check if ye void can.

*Fan.* In faith, else had I gone too long to school,  
But if I could know a goose from a swan!

*Magn.* Well, wise men may eat the fish when ye shall  
draw the pole.

*Fan.* In faith, I will not say that ye shall prove a fole,  
But oft time have I seen wise men do mad deeds.

*Magn.* Go shake thee, dog, hey, sith ye will needs!

You are nothing meet with us for to dwell,

That with your lord and master so pertly can prate:

Get you hence, I say, by my counsell;

I will not use you to play with me check-mate!

*Fan.* Sir, if I have offended your noble estate,  
I trow I have brought you such writing of record  
That I shall have you again my good lord.

To you recommendeth Sad Circumspection,

And sendeth you this writing closed under seal.

<sup>1</sup>nags.

Hr

*Magn.* This writing is welcome with hearty affection.

Why kept you it thus long? How doth he? Weel?

*Fan.* Sir, thanked be God, he hath his heal.

*Magn.* Wealth, get you home, and commend me to Measure;  
Bid him take good heed to you, my singular treasure.

*Fel.* Is there anything else your grace will command me?

*Magn.* Nothing but fare you well till soon;  
And that he take good keep of Libertie.

*Fel.* Your pleasure, sir, shortly shall be doon.

*Magn.* I shall come to you myself, I trow, this afternoon.

[Exit FELICITY.]

I pray you, Largesse, here to remain  
Whilst I know what this letter doth contain.

Stage I. Scene 7

*As MAGNIFICENCE is reading the letter, COUNTERFEIT COUNTEenance comes in on tiptoe, humming to himself, but, seeing MAGNIFICENCE, withdraws quietly; then, a little later, he comes back again, hailing FANCY from a safe distance. FANCY motions him to keep quiet.*

*C. Count.* What! Fancy, Fancy!

*Magn.* Who is that that thus did cry?  
Methought he calléd Fancy.

*Fan.* It was a Fleming hight Hansy.

*Magn.* Methought he calléd Fancy me behind.

*Fan.* Nay, sir, it was nothing but your mind.  
But now, sir, as touching this letter –

*Magn.* I shall look in it at leisure better:  
And surely ye are to him behold,  
And for his sake right gladly I wold  
Do what I could to do you good.

*Fan.* I pray God keep you in that mood!

*Magn.* This letter was written far hence.

*Fan.* By lakin,<sup>1</sup> sir, it hath cost me pence  
And groats many one, ere I came to your presence!

*Magn.* Where was it delivered you, shew unto me.

*Fan.* By God, sir, beyond the sea.

*Magn.* At what place now, as you guess?

*Fan.* By my troth, sir, at Pontesse<sup>2</sup>:

This writing was taken me<sup>3</sup> there,

But never was I in greater fear.

*Magn.* How so?

*Fan.* By God, at the sea side,

Had I not opened by purse wide

I trow, by our Lady, I had been slain,

Or else I had lost mine ears twain.

*Magn.* By your sooth?

*Fan.* Yea, and there is such a watch

That no man can 'scape but they him catch.

They bear me in hand<sup>4</sup> that I was a spy,

And another bade put out mine eye,

Another would mine eye was bleared,

Another bade shave half my beard;

And boys to the pillory 'gan me pluck,

And would have made me Friar Tuck,

To preach out of the pillory hole

Without an anthem or a stole;

And some bade "Sear him with a mark!"

To get me fro them I had much wark.

*Magn.* Mary, sir, ye were afrayed!

*Fan.* By my troth, had I not paid and prayed,

And made largesse, as I hight,

I had not been here with you this night;

But surely largesse saved my life,

For largesse stinteth all manner of strife.

*Magn.* It doth so, sure, now and then;

But largesse is not meet for every man.

<sup>1</sup>ladykin (By our Lady).

<sup>3</sup>consigned to me.

<sup>2</sup>Pontoise.

<sup>4</sup>accused me.

*Fan.* No, but for you great estates.  
Largesse stinteth great debates,  
And he that I came fro to this place  
Said I was meet for your grace.  
And indeed, sir, I hear men talk  
By the way, as I ride and walk,  
Say how you exceed in nobleness  
If you had with you Largesse.

*Magn.* And say they so in very deed?

*Fan.* With yea, sir, so God me speed.

*Magn.* Yet Measure is a merry mean.

*Fan.* Yea, sir, a blanched almond is no bean!  
Measure is meet for a merchant's hall,  
But Largesse becometh a state royall.

What, should you pinch at a peck of oats,  
Ye would soon pinch at a peck of groats!  
Thus is the talking of one and of other,  
As men dare speak it hugger mugger:  
A lord, a nigard, it is a shame!

But Largesse may amend your name

*Magn.* In faith, Largesse, welcome to me.

*Fan.* I pray you, sir, I may so be,  
And of my service you shall not miss.

*Magn.* Together we will talk more of this:  
Let us depart from hence home to my place.

*Fan.* I follow even after your noble grace.

[*Exit* MAGNIFICENCE. COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE,  
*entering, detains* FANCY.]

*C. Count.* What, I say, hark a word!

*Fan.* Do away, I say, the devil's turd!

*C. Count.* Yea, but how long shall I here await?

*Fan.* By God's body, I come straight!  
I hate this blundering<sup>1</sup> that thou dost make.

[*Exit.*

*C. Count.* Now, to the devil I thee betake,  
For in faith ye be well met!

<sup>1</sup>disturbance.



*Stage 2. Scene 8. CONSPIRACY*

COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE *alone in the place*

*C. Count.* Fancy hath catchéd in a fly-net  
This noble man Magnificence,  
Of Largesse under the pretence.  
They have made me here to put the stone:  
But now will I, that they be gone,  
In bastard time, after the doggerel guise,  
Tell you whereof my name doth rise.

For Counterfeit Countenance known am I,  
This world is full of my folly.

I set not by him a fly  
That cannot counterfeit a lie,  
Swear, and stare, and bide thereby,  
And countenance it cleanly,  
And defend it mannerly.

A knave will counterfeit now a knight,  
A lurdain<sup>1</sup> like a lord to flight,<sup>2</sup>  
A minstrel like a man of might,  
A tapster<sup>3</sup> like a lady bright:  
Thus make I them with thrift to fight,  
Thus at the last I bring him right  
To Tyburn, where they hang on hight.

To counterfeit I can by pretty ways:  
Of nights to occupy counterfeit keys,  
Cleanly to counterfeit new arrays,  
Counterfeit earnest by way of plays:  
Thus am I occupied at all essays.  
Whatsoever I do, all men me praise,  
And mickle am I made of nowadays.

<sup>1</sup>vagabond.

<sup>2</sup>scold.

<sup>3</sup>a barmaid.

Counterfeit matters in the law of the land,  
 With gold and groats they grease my hand  
 In stead of right that wrong may stand,  
 And counterfeit freedom that is bound;  
 I counterfeit sugar that is but found;  
 Counterfeit captains by me are mann'd;  
 Of all lewdness I kindle the brand;

Counterfeit kindness, and think deceit;  
 Counterfeit letters by the way of sleight;  
 Subtily using counterfeit weight;  
 Counterfeit language, *fait bon geyt*.<sup>1</sup>  
 Counterfeit is a proper bait;  
 A count to counterfeit in a reseit, —  
 To counterfeit well is a good conceit.

Counterfeit maidenhood may well be born,  
 But counterfeit coins is laughing to scorn;  
 It is evil patching of that is torn,  
 When the nap is rough, it would be shorn;  
 Counterfeit halting without a thorn,  
 Yet counterfeit chaffer<sup>2</sup> is but evil corn;  
 All thing is worse when it is worn.

What would ye, wives, counterfeit  
 The courtly guise of the new jet<sup>3</sup>?  
 An old barn would be underset:  
 It is much worth that is far-fet.<sup>4</sup>  
 What, wanton, wanton, now well ymet!  
 What, Margery Milk Duck, marmoset!  
 It would be maskéd in my net;

It would be nice, though I say nay;  
 By Crede, it would have fresh array,  
 And therefore shall my husband pay;

<sup>1</sup>i.e. *gentle* — makes a good story.

<sup>2</sup>merchandise.

<sup>3</sup>fashion.

<sup>4</sup>far-fetched.

To counterfeit she will essay  
 All the new guise, fresh and gay.  
 And be as pretty as she may,  
 And jet it<sup>1</sup> jolly as a jay.

Counterfeit preaching, and believe the contrary;  
 Counterfeit conscience, peevish pope holy;  
 Counterfeit sadness,<sup>2</sup> with dealing full madly;  
 Counterfeit holiness is called hypocrisy;  
 Counterfeit reason is not worth a fly;  
 Counterfeit wisdom, and works of folly;  
 Counterfeit countenance every man doth occupy.

Counterfeit worship<sup>3</sup> outward men may see;  
 Riches rideth out, at home is povertie;  
 Counterfeit pleasure is borne out by me:  
 Coll would go cleanly, and it will not be,  
 And Annot would be nice, and laughs "Tehe wehe!"  
 Your counterfeit countenance is all of necessity,  
 A pluméd partridge all ready to fly.

A knuckleboneyard will counterfeit a clerk,  
 He would trot gently, but he is too stark,  
 At his cloakéd counterfeiting dogs do bark;  
 A carter a courtier, it is a worthy wark,  
 That with his whip his mares was wont to yark<sup>4</sup>;  
 A coistrell<sup>5</sup> to drive the devil out of the dark,  
 A counterfeit courtier with a knavés mark.

To counterfeit thus friars have learned me;  
 Thus nuns now and then, an it might be,  
 Would take in the way of counterfeit charitie  
 The grace of God under *benedicite*;  
 To counterfeit their counsel they give me a fee;  
 Canons cannot counterfeit but upon three,  
 Monks may not for dread that man should them see.

<sup>1</sup>strut.<sup>2</sup>sobriety.<sup>3</sup>dignity, position.<sup>4</sup>lash.<sup>5</sup>groom.

*Stage 2. Scene 9**Enter FANCY, talking excitedly to CRAFTY CONVEYANCE**Cr. Con.* What, Counterfeit Countenance!*C. Count.* What, Crafty Conveyance!*Fan.* What, the devil, are ye two of acquaintance?

God give you a very mischance!

*Cr. Coun.* Yes, yes, sir, he and I have met.*C. Count.* We have been together both early and late.

But, Fancy, my friend, where have ye been so long?

*Fan.* By God, I have been about a pretty prong<sup>1</sup>;

Crafty Conveyance, I should say, and I.

*Cr. Con.* By God, we have made Magnificence to eat a fly!*C. Count.* How could ye do that, an I was away?*Fan.* By God, man, both his pageant and thine he can play.*C. Count.* Say truth?*Cr. Con.* Yes, yes, by lakin, I shall thee warrant,  
As long as I live, thou hast an heir apparent.*Fan.* Yet have we pickéd out a room<sup>2</sup> for thee.*C. Count.* Why, shall we dwell together all three?*Cr. Con.* Why, man, it were too great a wonder

That we three gallants should be long assunder.

*C. Count.* For Cock's<sup>3</sup> heart, give me thy hand!*Fan.* By the mass, for ye are able to destroy an whole land!*Cr. Con.* By God, yet it must begin much of thee.*Fan.* Who that is ruled by us it shall be long ere he three.<sup>4</sup>*C. Count.* But, I say, keepest thou the old name still that  
thou had?*Cr. Con.* Why wendest thou, whoreson, that I were so mad?*Fan.* Nay, nay, he hath changéd his, and I have changéd mine.*C. Count.* Now, what is his name, and what is thine?*Fan.* In faith, Largesse I hight.

And I am made a knight.

*C. Count.* A rebellion against nature,  
So large a man, and so little of stature!<sup>1</sup>prank.<sup>2</sup>i.e. a place.<sup>3</sup>i.e. God's.<sup>4</sup>thrive.

But, sir, how counterfeited ye?

*Cr. Con.* Sure Surveyance I naméd me.

*C. Count.* Surveyance! where ye survey  
Thrift hath lost her coffer-key!

*Fan.* But is it not well? how thinkest thou?

*C. Count.* Yes, sir, I give God a vow,  
Myself could not counterfeit it better.

But what became of the letter

That I counterfeited you underneath a shrowd?

*Fan.* By the mass, oddly well allowed.

*Cr. Con.* By God, had not I it conveyéd  
Fancy had been discredéd.<sup>1</sup>

*C. Count.* I wot, thou art false enough for one.

*Fan.* By my troth, we had been gone:

And yet, in faith, man, we lackéd thee

For to speak with Libertie.

*C. Count.* What is Largesse without Libertie?

*Cr. Con.* By Measure mastered yet is he.

*C. Count.* What, is your conveyance no better?

*Fan.* In faith, Measure is like a tetter<sup>2</sup>

That overgroweth a man's face,

So he ruleth over all our place.

*Cr. Con.* Now therefore, whilst we are together, —

Counterfeit Countenance, nay, come hither, —

I say, whilst we are together in same —

*C. Count.* Tush, a straw, it is a shame

Than we can no better than so.

*Fan.* We will remedy it, man, ere we go:

For, like as mustard is sharp of taste,

Right so a sharp fancy must be found

Wherewith Measure to confound.

*Cr. Con.* Con you a remedy for a tisis,<sup>3</sup>

That sheweth yourself thus sped in physic?

*C. Count.* It is a gentle reason of a rake!

*Fan.* For all these japes yet that ye make —

*Cr. Con.* Your fancy maketh mine elbow to ache!

<sup>1</sup>discovered.

<sup>2</sup>a skin disease.

<sup>3</sup>phthisis.

*Fan.* Let see, find you a better way.

*C. Count.* Take no displeasure of what we say.

*Cr. Con.* Nay, an you be angry and overwrought,  
A man may beshrew your angry heart.

*Fan.* Tush, a straw, I thought no ill.

*C. Count.* What, shall we jangle thus all the day still?

*Cr. Con.* Nay, let us our heads together cast.

*Fan.* Yea, and see how it may be compassed  
That Measure were cast out of the doors.

*C. Count.* Alas, where is my boots and my spurs?

*Cr. Con.* In all this haste whither will ye ride?

*C. Count.* I trow, it shall not need to abide.

Cock's wounds, see, sirs, see, see!

*Stage 2. Scene 10*

*Enter CLOAKED COLLUSION, pacing up and down  
with a grand air*

*Fan.* Cock's arms, what is he?

*Cr. Con.* By Cock's heart, he looketh high!  
He hawketh, methink, for a butterfly.

*C. Count.* Now, by Cock's heart, well abidden,  
For, had you not come, I had ridden.

*Cl. Col.* Thy words be but wind, never they have no weight;  
Thou hast made me play the jurd hayt.

*C. Count.* And if ye knew how I have mused  
I am sure ye would have me excused.

*Cl. Col.* I say, come hither: what are these twain?

*C. Count.* By God, sir, this is Fancy small brain,  
And Crafty Conveyance, know you not him?

*Cl. Col.* "Know him, sir!" quod he: yes, by Saint Sim!  
Here is a leash of ratches<sup>1</sup> to run a hare:

Woe is that purse that ye shall share!

*Fan.* What call ye him – this?

<sup>1</sup>hounds.

*Cr. Con.* I trow what he is –

*C. Count.* Tush, hold your peace.

See you not how they press

For to know your name?

*Cl. Col.* Know they not me, they are to blame.

Know you not me, sirs?

*Fan.* No, indeed.

*Cr. Con.* Abide, let me see, take better heed;

Cock's heart, it is Cloaked Collusion!

*Cl. Col.* Ay, sir, I pray God give you confusion!

*Fan.* Cock's arms, is that your name?

*C. Count.* Yea, by the mass, this is even the same,

That all this matter must under grope.<sup>1</sup>

*Cr. Con.* What is this he weareth – a cope?

*Cl. Col.* Cap, sir! I say you be too bold.

*Fan.* See how he is wrapped for the cold:

Is it not a vestment?

*Cl. Col.* Ah, ye want a rope!

*C. Count.* Tush, it is Sir John Double-Cope.

*Fan.* Sir, an if you would not be wroth –

*Cl. Col.* What say'st?

*Fan.* Here was too little cloth!

*Cl. Col.* Ah, Fancy, Fancy, God send thee brain!

*Fan.* Yea, for your wit is cloakéd for the rain.

*Cr. Con.* Nay, let us not chatter thus still.

*Cl. Col.* Tell me, sirs, what is your will.

*C. Count.* Sir, it is so that these twain

With Magnificence in household do remain,

And there they would have me to dwell,

But I will be ruled after your counsell.

*Fan.* Mary, so will we also.

*Cl. Col.* But tell me whereabout ye go.

*C. Count.* By God, we would get us all thither

Spell the remnant, and do together.\*

*Cl. Col.* Hath Magnificence any treasure?

*Cr. Con.* Yea, but he spendeth it all in measure.

<sup>1</sup>seize, understand.

\*i.e. put it together.

*Cl. Col.* Why, dwelleth Measure where ye two dwell?  
In faith, he were better to dwell in hell!

*Fan.* Yet where we wonne,<sup>1</sup> now there wonneth he.

*Cl. Col.* And have you not among you Libertie.

*C. Count.* Yea, but he is in captivitie.

*Cl. Col.* What the devil! how may that be?

*C. Count.* I cannot tell you: why ask you me?

Ask these two that there doth dwell.

*Cl. Col.* Sir, the plainness<sup>2</sup> you me tell.

*Cr. Con.* There dwelleth a master men calleth Measure –

*Fan.* Yea, and he hath rule of all his treasure.

*Cr. Con.* Nay, either let me tell, or else tell ye.

*Fan.* I care not, tell on for me.

*C. Count.* I pray God let you never to three<sup>3</sup>!

*Cl. Col.* What the devil aileth you? can you not agree?

*Cr. Con.* I will pass over the circumstance

And shortly shew you the whole substance.

Fancy and I, we twain,

With Magnificence in household do remain,

And counterfeited our names we have

Craftily all things upright to save,

His name Largesse, Surveyance mine:

Magnificence to us beginneth to incline

Counterfeit Countenance to have also,

And would that we should for him go.

*C. Count.* But shall I have mine old name still?

*Cr. Con.* Peace, I have not yet said what I will.

*Fan.* Here is a 'pistle of a postic!

*Cl. Col.* Tush, fonnish Fancy, thou art frantic!

Tell on, sir – how then?

*Cr. Con.* Mary, sir, he told us when

We had him found we should him bring,

And that we failed not for nothing.

*Cl. Col.* All this ye may easily bring about.

*Fan.* Mary, the better an Measure were out.

*Cl. Col.* Why, can ye not put out that foul freke<sup>4</sup>?

<sup>1</sup>dwell.

<sup>2</sup>the plain fact.

<sup>3</sup>thrive.

<sup>4</sup>fellow.



*Cr. Con.* No, in every corner he will peke,  
So that we have no libertie,  
Nor no man in court but he,  
For Liberty he hath in guiding.

*C. Count.* In faith, and without Liberty there is no biding.

*Fan.* In faith, and Liberty's room is there but small.

*Cl. Col.* Hem! that like I nothing at all.

*Cr. Con.* But, Counterfeit Countenance, go we together,  
All three, I say.

*C. Count.* Shall I go? whither?

*Cr. Con.* To Magnificence with us twain,  
And in his service thee to retain.

*C. Count.* But then, sir, what shall I hight?

*Cr. Con.* Ye and I talkéd thereof to-night.

*Fan.* Yea, my fancy was out of owl-flight,  
For it is out of my mindè quite.

*Cr. Con.* And now it cometh to my remembrance:  
Sir, ye shall hight Good Demeanance.

*C. Count.* By the arms of Calais, well conceived!

*Cr. Con.* When we have him thither conveyed,  
What an I frame such a sleight

That Fancy with his fond conceit  
Put Magnificence in such a madness

That he shall have you in the stead of sadness,  
And Sober Sadness shall be your name!

*Cl. Col.* By Cock's body, here beginneth the game!  
For then shall we so craftily carry

That Measure shall not there long tarry.

*Fan.* For Cock's heart, tarry whilst that I come again.

*Cr. Con.* We will see you shortly one of us again.

*C. Count.* Now let us go, an we shall, then.

*Cl. Col.* Now let us see acquit you like pretty men.

[Exit FANCY, CRAFTY CONVEYANCE and  
COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE.]

*Stage 2. Scene 11**Here CLOAKED COLLUSION promenades*

*Cl. Col.* To pass the time and order while a man may talk  
Of one thing and other to occupy the place;  
Then for the season that I here shall walk,  
As good to be occupied as up and down to trace  
And do nothing. Howbeit, full little grace  
There cometh and groweth of my coming,  
For Cloaked Collusion is a perilous thing.

Double dealing and I be all one,  
Crafting and hafting contrived is by me;  
I can dissemble, I can both laugh and grone,  
Plain dealing and I can never agree:  
But division, dissension, derision, these three  
And I am counterfeit of one mind and thought,  
By the means of mischief to bring all things to nought.

And though I be so odious a guest,  
And every man gladly my company would refuse,  
In faith yet am I occupié with the best:  
Full few that can themselves of me excuse.  
When other men laugh, then study I and muse,  
Devising the means and ways that I can,  
How I may hurt and hinder every man.

Two faces in a hood covertly I bear,  
Water in the one hand, and fire in the other;  
I can feed forth a fool, and lead him by the ear:  
Falsehood-in-Fellowship is my sworn brother.  
By Cloaked Collusion, I say, and none other,  
Cumberance and trouble in England first began:  
From that lord to that lord I rode and I ran,

And flattered them with fables fair before their face,  
And told all the mischief I could behind their back,

And made as I had knowen nothing of the case:

I would begin all mischief, but I would bear no lack.<sup>1</sup>

Thus can I learn you, sirs, to bear the devil's sack.

And yet, I trow, some of you be better sped than I  
Friendship to feign, and think full litherly.<sup>2</sup>

Paint<sup>3</sup> to a purpose good countenance I can,

And craftily can I grope how every man is minded;

My purpose is to spy and to point every man;

My tongue is with favell<sup>4</sup> forked and tynéd<sup>5</sup>:

By Cloaked Collusion thus many one is beguiled.

Each man to hinder I gape and I gasp:

My speech is all pleasure, but I sting like a wasp.

I am never glad but when I may do ill,

And never am I sorry but when that I see

I cannot mine appetite accomplish and fulfil

In hinderance of wealth and prosperitie:

I laugh at all shrewdness, and lie at libertie.

I muster, I meddle; among these great estates

I sow seditious seeds of dischord and debates.

To flatter and to fleer is all my pretence

Among all such persons as I well understand

Be light of belief and hasty of credence;

I make them to startle and sparkle like a brond,

I move them, I maze them, I make them so fond

That they will hear no man but the first tale:

And so by these means I brew much bale.<sup>6</sup>

*Stage 2. Scene 12*

*Enter COURTLY ABUSION, singing*

*Court. Ab.* Huffa, huffa, tanderum, tanderum, tain, huffa,  
huffa!

*Cl. Col.* This was properly prated, sirs! what said a<sup>7</sup>?

<sup>1</sup>blame.

<sup>2</sup>wickedly.

<sup>3</sup>feign.

<sup>4</sup>cajolery.

<sup>5</sup>pointed.

<sup>6</sup>trouble.

<sup>7</sup>he.

*Court. Ab.* Rutty bully, jolly rutterkin, heyda!

*Cl. Col.* *De que pays êtes vous?*

[*With an ironical air he makes as if to doff his hat.*

*Court. Ab.* Deck your hoft and cover a lowse.

*Cl. Col.* *Say vous<sup>1</sup> chanter, "Ventre tres douce"?*

*Court. Ab.* *Oui-da, oui-da.<sup>2</sup>*

How say'st thou, man, am not I a jolly rutter<sup>3</sup>?

*Cl. Col.* Give this gentleman room, sirs, stand utter<sup>4</sup>!

By God, sir, what need all this waste?

What is this, a betill, or a botow,<sup>5</sup> or a buskin lacéd?

*Court. Ab.* What, wendest thou that I know thee not,  
Cloaked Collusion?

*Cl. Col.* And wendest thou that I know not thee, cankered  
Abusion?

*Court. Ab.* Cankered Jack Hare, look thou be not rusty,<sup>6</sup>

For thou shalt well know I am neither dirty nor dusty!

*Cl. Col.* Dusty! nay, sir, ye be all of the lusty,

Howbeit of scape thrift your cloaks smelleth musty.

But whither art thou walking, in faith unfeigned?

*Court. Ab.* Mary, with Magnificence I would be retained.

*Cl. Col.* By the mass, for the court thou art a meet man:

Thy slippers they swop it, yet thou footest it like a swan.

*Court. Ab.* Yea, so I can devise my gear after the courtly  
manner.

*Cl. Col.* So thou art personable to bear a prince's banner.

*Court. Ab.* By God's foot, and I dare well fight, for I will not  
start.

*Cl. Col.* Nay, thou art a man good enough — but for thy  
false heart.

*Court. Ab.* Well, an I be a coward, there is more than I.

*Cl. Col.* Yea, in faith a bold man and a hardy:

A bold man in bowl of new ale in corns!

*Court. Ab.* Will ye see this gentleman is all in his scorns?

*Cl. Col.* But are ye not advised to dwell where ye spake?

<sup>1</sup>i.e. *Sangz-vous*.

<sup>2</sup>Yes, indeed.

<sup>3</sup>dashing fellow.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. stand back.

<sup>5</sup>boot.

<sup>6</sup>uncivil.

*Court. Ab.* I am of few words, I love not to bark.

Bearest thou any room, or canst thou do ought?

Canst thou help me, in favour that I might be brought?

*Cl. Col.* I may do somewhat, and more I think shall.

*Stage 2. Scene 13*

*Enter CRAFTY CONVEYING, pointing with his finger*

*Cr. Con.* Hem, Collusion!

*Court. Ab.* By Cock's heart, who is yonder that for thee doth call?

*Cr. Con.* Nay, come at once, for the armès of the dice!

*Court. Ab.* Cock's arms, he hath callèd for thee twice!

*Cl. Col.* By Cock's heart, and call shall again:

To come to me, I trow, he shall be fain.

*Court. Ab.* What, is thy heart prickèd with such a proud pin?

*Cl. Col.* Tush, he that hath need, man, let him run.

*Cr. Con.* Nay, come away, man: thou playest the kayser.

*Cl. Col.* By the mass, thou shalt bide my leisure.

*Cr. Con.* "Abide, sir," quod he! mary, so I do.

*Court. Ab.* He will come, man, when he may tend<sup>1</sup> to.

*Cr. Con.* What the devil, who sent for thee?

*Cl. Col.* Here he is now, man; may'st thou not see?

*Cr. Con.* What the devil, man, what thou meanest?

Art thou so angry as thou seemest?

*Court. Ab.* What the devil, can ye agree no better?

*Cr. Con.* What the devil, where had we this jolly jetter?

*Cl. Col.* What say'st thou, man? why dost thou not supplie,  
And desire me thy good master to be?

*Court. Ab.* Speakest thou to me?

*Cl. Col.* Yea, so I tell thee.

*Court. Ab.* Cock's bones, I ne tell can

Which of you is the better man,

Or which of you can do most.

*Cr. Con.* In faith, I rule much of the rost.

*Cl. Col.* Rule the roost! thou wouldest, ye?

As scant thou had no need of me.

*Cr. Con.* Need! yes, mary, I say not nay.

*Court. Ab.* Cock's heart, I trow thou wilt make a fray!

*Cr. Con.* Nay, in good faith, it is but the guise.<sup>1</sup>

*Cl. Col.* No, for ere we strike, we will be advised twice.

*Court. Ab.* What the devil, use ye not to draw no swords?

*Cr. Con.* No, by my troth, but crack great words.

*Court. Ab.* Why, is this the guise now-a-days?

*Cl. Col.* Yea, for surety – oft peace is taken for frays.

But, sir, I will have this man with me.

*Cr. Con.* Convey yourself first, let see.

*Cl. Col.* Well, tarry here till I for you send.

*Cr. Con.* Why, shall he be of your bend?<sup>2</sup>

*Cl. Col.* Tarry here: wot ye well what I say?

*Court. Ab.* I warrant you, I will not go away.

*Cr. Con.* By Saint Mary, he is a tall<sup>3</sup> man.

*Cl. Col.* Yea, and do right good service he can.

I know in him no default,

But that the whoreson is prowd and haut.

[*Exit CLOAKED COLLUSION and CRAFTY CONVEYANCE.*]

*Court. Ab.* Nay, purchase ye a pardon for the pose,<sup>4</sup>

For pride hath plucked thee by the nose,

As well as me. I would, an I durst –

But now I will not say the worst.

*Stage 2. Scene 14*

*COURTLY ABUSION alone in the place*

*Court. Ab.* What now, let see,

Who looketh on me

Well round about,

How gay and how stout

That I can wear

Courtly my gear.

<sup>1</sup>fashion.

<sup>2</sup>band.

<sup>3</sup>bold.

<sup>4</sup>catarrh.

# MAGNIFICENCE

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My hair brusheth  
 So pleasantly,  
 My robe rusheth  
 So ruttingly,<sup>1</sup>  
 Meseem I fly,  
 I am so light  
 To dance delight.

Properly<sup>2</sup> dressed,  
 All point devise,  
 My person pressed  
 Beyond all size  
 Of the new guise,  
 To rush it out  
 In every rout.

Beyond measure  
 My sleeve is wide,  
 All of pleasure  
 My hose strait tied,  
 My buskin wide  
 Rich to behold,  
 Glittering in gold.

Abusion,  
 Forsooth, I hight;  
 Confusion  
 Shall on him light,  
 By day or by night,  
 That useth me:  
 He cannot three.<sup>3</sup>

A very fon,<sup>4</sup>  
 A very ass,  
 Will take upon  
 To compass  
 That never was

<sup>1</sup>dashingy.

<sup>2</sup>handsomely.

<sup>3</sup>thrive.

<sup>4</sup>fool.

## MAGNIFICENCE

Abuséd before;  
A very pore

That so will do,  
He doth abuse  
Himself too too,  
He doth misuse  
Each man take a fee.<sup>1</sup>  
To crake and prate<sup>2</sup>:  
I befool his pate.

This new fon jet<sup>3</sup>  
From out of France  
First I did set,  
Made purveyance  
And such ordinance  
That all men it found  
Throughout England.

All this nation  
I set on fire  
In my fashion,  
This their desire,  
This new attire:  
This ladies have,  
I it them gave.

Spare for no cost:  
And yet in deed  
It is cost lost,  
Much more than need  
For to exceed  
In such array:  
Howbeit, I say,

<sup>1</sup>Some corruption in text here.

<sup>2</sup>vaunt.

<sup>3</sup>foolish fashion.



A carl's<sup>1</sup> son,  
 Brought up of nought,  
 With me will wonn<sup>2</sup>  
 Whilst he hath ought:  
 He will have wrought  
 His gown so wide  
 That he may hide

His dame and his sire  
 Within his sleeve;  
 Spend all his hire  
 That men him give.  
 Wherefore I preve  
 A Tyburn check<sup>3</sup>  
 Shall break his neck.

*Enter FANCY*

*Fan.* Stow, stow!

*Court. Ab.* All is out of harre,<sup>4</sup>  
 And out of trace,  
 Aye warre and warre<sup>5</sup>  
 In every place.

*Stage 2. Scene 15*

But what the devil art thou,  
 That criest "Stow, stow!"

*Fan.* What, whom have we here – Jenkin Joly?  
 Now welcome, by the God holy!

*Court. Ab.* What, Fancy, friend! how dost thou fare?

*Fan.* By Christ, as merry as a March hare!

*Court. Ab.* What the devil hast thou on thy fist – an owl?

*Fan.* Nay, it is a farly<sup>6</sup> fowl.

<sup>1</sup>churl's.

<sup>2</sup>dwell.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. a rope.

<sup>4</sup>out of joint.

<sup>5</sup>worse and worse.

<sup>6</sup>strange.

*Court. Ab.* Methink she frowneth and looketh sour.

*Fan.* Turd, man, it is an hawk of the tower;  
She is made for the malard fat.

*Court. Ab.* Methink she is well-beaked to catch a rat.  
But now what tidings can you tell, let see.

*Fan.* Mary, I am come for thee.

*Court. Ab.* For me?

*Fan.* Yea, for thee, so I say.

*Court. Ab.* How so ? tell me, I thee pray.

*Fan.* Why, heard you not of the fray  
That fell among us this same day?

*Court. Ab.* No, mary, not yet.

*Fan.* What the devil, never a whit?

*Court. Ab.* No, by the mass; what should I swear?

*Fan.* In faith, Liberty is now a lusty spere.<sup>1</sup>

*Court. Ab.* Why, under whom was he abiding?

*Fan.* Mary, Measure had him a while in guiding,  
Till, as the devil would, they fell a-chiding  
With Crafty Conveyance.

*Court. Ab.* Yea, did they so?

*Fan.* Yea, by God's sacrament, and with other mo.

*Court. Ab.* What needed that, in the devil's date?

*Fan.* Yes, yes, he fell with me also at debate.

*Court. Ab.* With thee also? what, he playeth the state?

*Fan.* Yea, but I bade him pick out of the gate,  
By God's body, so did I!

*Court. Ab.* By the mass, well done, and boldly!

*Fan.* Hold thy peace, Measure shall from us walk.

*Court. Ab.* Why, is he crossed then with a chalk?

*Fan.* Crossed! yea, checked out of conceit.<sup>2</sup>

*Court. Ab.* How so?

*Fan.* By God, by a pretty sleight,  
As hereafter thou shalt know more.

But I must tarry here, go thou before.

*Court. Ab.* With whom shall I there meet?

*Fan.* Crafty Conveyance standeth in the street,

\*stripling.

\*out of favour.

Even of purpose for the same.

*Court. Ab.* Yea, but what shall I call my name?

*Fan.* Cock's heart, turn thee, let me see thine array  
Cock's bones, this is all of John de Gay!

*Court. Ab.* So I am 'pointed after my conceit.

*Fan.* Mary, thou jettest it of height<sup>1</sup>!

*Court. Ab.* Yea, but of my name let us be wise.

*Fan.* Mary, Lusty Pleasure, by mine advise,  
To name thyself. Come off, it were done.

*Court. Ab.* Farewell, my friend.

*Fan.* Adieu, till sone.

[*Exit* COURTLY ABUSION.]

*Stage 2. Scene 16*

*Fan.* Stow, bird, stow, stow!

It is best I feed my hawk now.

There is many evil favoured, an thou be foul.

Each thing is fair when it is young: all hail, owl!

Lo, this is  
My fancy ywis:  
Now Christ it blesse!  
It is, by Jesse,

A bird full sweet,  
For me full meet:  
She is furred for the heat  
All to the feet;

Her browes bent,  
Her eyen glent<sup>2</sup>:  
From Tyne to Trent,  
From Stroud to Kent,

<sup>1</sup>struttest it in high style.

<sup>2</sup>glancing.

A man shall find  
 Many of her kind.  
 How standeth the wind –  
 Before or behind?

Barbéd<sup>1</sup> like a nun,  
 For burning of the sun;  
 Her feathers dun,  
 Well-favoured, bonne!

Now, let me see about  
 In all this rout  
 If I can find out  
 So seemly a snout

Among this press:  
 Even a whole mess<sup>2</sup> –  
 Peace, man, Peace!  
 I rede<sup>3</sup> we cease.

So farly fair as it looks,  
 And her beak so comely crooks,  
 Her nailès sharp as tenter hooks!  
 I have not kept her yet three wooks.<sup>4</sup>

And how still she doth sit!  
 Tewit, tewit! Where is my wit?  
 The devil speed whit!

That was before, I set behind:  
 Now too courteous, forthwith unkind,  
 Sometime too sober, sometime too sad,  
 Sometime too merry, sometime too mad;  
 Sometime I sit as I were solemn proud,  
 Sometime I laugh over lowd,  
 Sometime I weep for a gee gaw,  
 Sometime I laugh at wagging of a straw;

<sup>1</sup>hooded.<sup>2</sup>set.<sup>3</sup>I advise.<sup>4</sup>weeks.

With a pear my love you may win,  
And ye may lose it for a pin.  
I have a thing for to say,  
And I may tend thereto for play;  
But in faith I am so occupied  
On this half and on every side,  
That I wot not where I may rest.  
First to tell you what were best,  
Frantic Fancy-service I hight:  
My wits be weak, my brains are light.  
For it is I that other while  
Pluck down lead, and thatch with tile;  
Now will I this, and now will I that,  
Make a windmill of a mat;  
Now I would, and I wist not what.  
Where is my cap? I have lost my hat!  
And within an hour after  
Pluck down a house, and set up a rafter.  
Hither and thither, I wot not whither:  
Do and undo, both together.  
Of a spindle I will make a spar:  
All that I make forthwith I mar!  
I blunder, I bluster, I blow, and I blother,  
I make on the one day, and I mar on the other.  
Busy, busy, and ever busy,  
I dance up and down till I am dizzy.  
I can find fantasies where none is:  
I will not have it so, I will have it this.<sup>1</sup>

*Stage 2. Scene 17*

*Enter FOLLY, shaking his bauble, capering about,  
and playing on an instrument*

*Fol.* Masters, Christ save everyone!  
What, Fancy, art thou here alone?

i.e. thus.

*Fan.* What, fonnish Folly! I befool thy face!

*Fol.* What, frantic Fancy in a fool's case<sup>1</sup>?

What is this, an owl or a glede<sup>2</sup>?

By my troth, she hath a great head!

*Fan.* Tush, thy lips hang in thine eye!

It is a French butterfly.

*Fol.* By my troth, I trow well!

But she is less a great deal

Than a butterfly of our land.

*Fan.* What pilde<sup>3</sup> cur ledest thou in thy hand?

*Fol.* A pilde cur!

*Fan.* Yea so, I tell thee, a pilde cur!

*Fol.* Yet I sold his skin to Mackmur

In the stead of a budge<sup>4</sup> fur.

*Fan.* What, flayest thou his skin every year?

*Fol.* Yes, in faith, I thank God I may hear.

*Fan.* What, thou wilt cough me a daw for forty pence?

*Fol.* Mary, sir, Cockermouth is a good way hence.

*Fan.* What? of Cockermouth spake I no word.

*Fol.* By my faith, sir, the frubisher hath my sword.

*Fan.* Ay, I trow ye shall cough me a fool.

*Fol.* In faith, truth ye say; we went together to school.

*Fan.* Yea, but I con somewhat more of the letter.

*Fol.* I will not give a halfpenny for to chose the better.

*Fan.* But, brother Folly, I wonder much of one thing,

That thou so high from me doth spring,

And I so little alway still.

*Fol.* By God, I can tell, an I will.

Thou art so feeble fantastical,

And so brainsick therewithal,

And thy wit wandering here and there,

That thou canst not grow out of thy boy's gear.

And as for me, I take but one foolish way,

And therefore I grow more on one day

Than thou can in yearés seven.

*Fan.* In faith, truth thou sayest now, by God of heaven!

<sup>1</sup>habit.

<sup>2</sup>kite.

<sup>3</sup>mangy.

<sup>4</sup>lamb's.

For so with fantasies my wit doth fleet,  
That wisdom and I shall seldom meet.

Now, of good fellowship, let me buy thy dog.

*Fol.* Cock's heart, thou liest, I am no hog!

*Fan.* Here is no man that calléd thee hog nor swine.

*Fol.* In faith, man, my brain is as good as thine.

*Fan.* The devil's turd for thy brain!

*Fol.* By my sire's soul, I feel no rain.

*Fan.* By the mass, I hold thee mad.

*Fol.* Mary, I knew thee when thou wast a lad.

*Fan.* Cock's bones, heard ye ever such another?

*Fol.* Yea, a fool the one, and a fool the other.

*Fan.* Nay, but wotest thou what I do say?

*Fol.* Why, sayest thou that I was here yesterday?

*Fan.* Cock's arms, this is a work, I trow!

*Fol.* What, callest thou me a dunnish crow?

*Fan.* Now, in good faith, thou art a fond guest.

*Fol.* Yea, bear me this straw to a daw's nest.

*Fan.* What, wendest thou that I were so foolish and so fond?

*Fol.* In faith, yet is there none in all England.

*Fan.* Yet for my fancy's sake, I say,

Let me have thy dog, whatsoever I pay.

*Fol.* Thou shalt have my purse, and I will have thine.

*Fan.* By my troth, there is mine.

*Fol.* Now, by my troth, man, take, there is my purse.

And I beshrew him that hath the worse.

*Fan.* Turd, I say, what have I do?

Here is nothing but the buckle of a shoe,

And in my purse was twenty mark.

*Fol.* Ha, ha, ha! hark, sirs, hark!

For all that my name hight Folly,

By the mass, yet art thou more fool than I.

*Fan.* Yet give me thy dog, and I am content,

And thou shalt have my hawk to a botchment.

*Fol.* That ever thou thrive, God it forfend<sup>1</sup>!

For God's cope thou wilt spend.

<sup>1</sup>forbid.

Now take thou my dog, and give me thy fowl.

*Fan.* Hey, chish, come hither!

*Fol.* Nay, turd, take him by time.

*Fan.* What callest thou thy dog?

*Fol.* Tush, his name is Grime.

*Fan.* Come, Grime, come, Grime. It is my pretty dogs!

*Fol.* In faith, there is not a better dog for hogs,  
Not from Anwick unto Aungey.

*Fan.* Yea, but trowest thou that he be not mangy?

*Fol.* No, by my troth, it is but the scurf and the scab.

*Fan.* What, he hath been hurt with a stab?

*Fol.* Nay, in faith, it was but a stripe  
That the whoreson had for eating of a tripe.

*Fan.* Where the devil gat he all these hurts?

*Fol.* By God, for snatching of puddings<sup>1</sup> and worts.<sup>2</sup>

*Fan.* What, then he is some good poor man's cur?

*Fol.* Yea, but he will in at every man door.

*Fan.* Now thou hast done me a pleasure great.

*Fol.* In faith, I would thou had'st a marmoset.

*Fan.* Cock's heart, I love such japes!

*Fol.* Yea, for all thy mind is on owls and apes.  
But I have thy poultry, and thou hast my cattle.

*Fan.* Yea, but thrift and we have made a battle.

*Fol.* Rememb'rest thou not the japes and the toys -

*Fan.* What, that we used when we were boys?

*Fol.* Yea, by the rood, even the same.

*Fan.* Yes, yes, I am yet as full of game  
As ever I was, and as full of trifles,

*Nil, nihilum, nihil anglice, nifles.<sup>3</sup>*

*Fol.* What connest thou all this Latin yet,  
And hath so mazed a wandering wit?

*Fan.* Tush, man, I keep some Latin in store.

*Fol.* By Cock's heart, I ween thou hast no more!

*Fan.* No? yes, in faith, I can versify.

*Fol.* Then I pray thee heartily  
Make a verse of my butterfly:

<sup>1</sup>i.e. meat-puddings.

<sup>2</sup>vegetables.

<sup>3</sup>trifles, also.



It forceth not<sup>1</sup> of the reason, so it keep rime.

*Fan.* But wilt thou make another on Grime?

*Fol.* Nay, in faith, first let me hear thine.

*Fan.* Mary, as for that thou shalt soon hear mine:

*Est snavi snago* with a shrewd face *vilis imago*.

*Fol.* Grimbaldus greedy, snatch a pudding till the roast be ready.

*Fan.* By the heart of God, well done!

*Fol.* Yea, so readily and so sone<sup>2</sup>!

*Stage 2. Scene 18*

*Enter CRAFTY CONVEYANCE*

*Cr. Con.* What, Fancy! Let me see who is the other.

*Fan.* By God, sir, Folly, mine own sworn brother!

*Cr. Con.* Cock's bones, it is a farly freke<sup>3</sup>:

Can he play well at the hodiipeke<sup>4</sup>?

*Fan.* Tell by thy troth what sport canst thou make.

*Fol.* Ah, hold thy peace: I have the tooth-ache.

*Cr. Con.* The tooth-ache! lo, a turd ye have!

*Fol.* Yea, thou hast the four quarters of a knave.

*Cr. Con.* Wotest thou, I say, to whom thou speaks?

*Fan.* Nay, by Cock's heart, he ne recks,<sup>5</sup>

For he will speak to Magnificence thus.

*Cr. Con.* Cock's arms, a meet man for us!

*Fol.* What, would ye have more fools, and are so many?

*Fan.* Nay, offer him a counter in stead of a penny.

*Cr. Con.* Why, thinkest thou he can no better skill?

*Fol.* In faith, I can make ye both fools, an I will.

*Cr. Con.* What hast thou on thy fist — a kesteril?

*Fol.* Nay, ywis, fool, it is a doteril.

*Cr. Con.* In a coat thou can play well the diser.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>matters not.

<sup>4</sup>fool.

<sup>2</sup>soon.

<sup>5</sup>recks not.

<sup>3</sup>strange fellow.

<sup>6</sup>scoffer.

*Fol.* Yea, but thou can play the fool without a viser.

*Fan.* How rode he by you? how put he you there?

*Cr. Con.* Mary, as thou sayest, he gave me a blur.  
But where gat you that mangy cur?

*Fan.* Mary, it was his, and now it is mine.

*Cr. Con.* And was it his, and now it is thine?

Thou must have thy fancy and thy will,

But yet thou shalt hold me a fool still.

*Fol.* Why, wendest thou that I cannot make thee play the  
fon<sup>1</sup>?

*Fan.* Yes, by my faith, good Sir John.

*Cr. Con.* For you both it were enough.

*Fol.* Why, wendest thou that I were as much a fool as  
thou?

*Fan.* Nay, nay, thou shalt find him another manner of man.

*Fol.* In faith, I can do masteries,<sup>2</sup> so I can.

*Cr. Con.* What canst thou do but play cock wat?

*Fan.* Yes, yes, he will make thee eat a gnat.

*Fol.* Yes, yes, by my troth, I hold thee a groat  
That I shall laugh thee out of thy coat.

*Cr. Con.* Then will I say that thou hast no peer.

*Fan.* Now, by the rood, and he will go near.

*Fol.* Hem, Fancy, *regardez vous*.

[Here FOLLY maketh semblance to take a louse from  
CRAFTY CONVEYANCE'S shoulder.

*Fan.* What hast thou found there?

*Fol.* By God, a louse.

*Cr. Con.* By Cock's heart, I trow thou liest.

*Fol.* By the mass, a Spanish moth with a gray list.

*Fan.* Ha ha ha ha ha!

*Cr. Con.* Cock's arms, it is not so, I trow.

[Here CRAFTY CONVEYANCE putteth off his gown.

*Fol.* Put on thy gown again, for thou hast lost now.

<sup>1</sup>fool.

<sup>2</sup>clever tricks.

*Fan.* Lo, John of Boham,<sup>1</sup> where is thy brain?

Now put on, fool, thy coat again.

*Fol.* Give me my groat, for thou hast lost.

[*Here FOLLY maketh semblance to take money of  
CRAFTY CONVEYANCE.*]

Shut thy purse, daw, and do no cost.

*Fan.* Now hast thou not a proud mock and a stark?

*Cr. Con.* With, yes, by the rood of Woodstock Park!

*Fan.* Nay, I tell thee, he maketh no doubts

To turn a fool out of his clouts.<sup>2</sup>

*Cr. Con.* And for a fool a man would him take.

*Fol.* Nay, it is I that fools can make:

For be he kayser or be he king,

To fellowship with Folly I can him bring.

*Fan.* Nay, wilt thou hear now of his schools,

And what manner of people he maketh fools?

*Cr. Con.* Yea, let us hear a word or twain.

*Fol.* Sir, of my manner I shall tell you the plain.

First I lay before them my bible,<sup>3</sup>

And teach them how they should sit idle,

To pick their fingers all day long;

So in their ear I sing them a song

And make them so long to muse

That some of them runneth straight to the stews<sup>4</sup>:

To theft and bribery I make some fall,

And pick a lock and climb a wall;

And where I spy a nisot<sup>5</sup> gay,

That will sit idle all the day,

And cannot set herself to wark,

I kindle in her such a lither<sup>6</sup> spark

That rubbed she must be on the gall

Between the tappet<sup>7</sup> and the wall.

*Cr. Con.* What, whoreson, art thou such a one?

<sup>1</sup>one of the persons in the old metrical tale, *The Hunting of the Hare.*

<sup>2</sup>clothes.

<sup>3</sup>Or, bauble(?).

<sup>4</sup>i.e. brothel.

<sup>5</sup>lazy jade.

<sup>6</sup>wicked.

<sup>7</sup>tapestry.

*Fan.* Nay, beyond all other set him alone.

*Cr. Con.* Hast thou any more? Let see, proceed.

*Fol.* Yea, by God, sir, for a need

I have another manner of sort

That I laugh at for my disport;

And those be they that come up of nought,

As some be not far, an if it were well sought:

Such daws, whatsoever they be

That be set in authoritie,

Anon he waxeth so high and proud,

He frowneth fiercely, brimly browed,

The knave would make it coy,<sup>1</sup> an he could;

All that he doth must be allowed,

And, "This is not well done, sir, take heed!"

And maketh himself busy where is no need:

He dances so long, hey, trolly lolly,

That every man laugheth at his folly.

*Cr. Con.* By the good Lord, truth he saith!

*Fan.* Thinkest thou not so, by thy faith?

*Cr. Con.* "Think I not so!" quod he. Else have I shame,

For I know divers that useth the same.

*Fol.* But now, forsooth, man, it maketh no matter,

For they will so busily smatter,

So help me God, man, ever at the length

I make them lose much of their strength;

For with folly so do I them lead,

That wit he wanteth when he hath most need.

*Fan.* Forsooth, tell on: hast thou any mo?

*Fol.* Yes, I shall tell you, ere I go,

Of divers mo that haunteth my schools.

*Cr. Con.* All men beware of such fools!

*Fol.* There be two lither, rude and rank,

Simkin Titivell and Pierce Pythank;

These lithers I learn them for to lere<sup>2</sup>

What he saith and she saith to lay good ear,

And tell to his sovereign every whit,

<sup>1</sup>haughty.

<sup>2</sup>know.

And then he is much made of for his wit.

And, be the matter ill more or less,

He will make it mickle worse than it is:

But all that he doth, and if he reckon well,

It is but folly every dell.

*Fan.* Are not his words cursedly couchéd?

*Cr. Con.* By God, there be some that be shrewdly touchéd.

But, I say, let see, and if thou have any more.

*Fol.* I have an whole armory of such haberdash in store;

For there be others that folly doth use,

That follow fond fantasies and virtue refuse.

*Fan.* Nay, this is my part that thou speakest of now.

*Fol.* So is all the remnant, I make God avow;

For thou formest such fantasies in their mind

That every man almost groweth out of kind.

*Cr. Con.* By the mass, I am glad that I came hither,

To hear you two rutters<sup>1</sup> dispute together.

*Fan.* Nay, but Fancy must be either first or last.

*Fol.* But when Folly cometh all is past.

*Fan.* I wot not whether it cometh of thee or of me,

But all is folly that I can see.

*Cr. Con.* Mary, sir, ye may swear it on a book!

*Fol.* Yea, turn over the leaf, read there and look

How frantic Fancy first of all

Maketh man and woman in folly to fall.

*Cr. Con.* Ay, sir, ay, ay! how by that!

*Fan.* A perilous thing to cast a cat

Upon a naked man, an if she scat.

*Fol.* So ho, I say, the hare is squat!

For, frantic Fancy, thou makest man mad;

And I, Folly, bringeth them to *qui fuit* gad,<sup>2</sup>

With *qui fuit*, brain-sick I have them brought,

From *qui fuit aliquid*,<sup>3</sup> to sheer shaking nought.<sup>4</sup>

*Cr. Con.* Well argued and surely on both sides!

But for thee, Fancy, Magnificence abides.

<sup>1</sup> gallants.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. to a state of regret — I "who was" — in the past.

<sup>3</sup> who was something.

<sup>4</sup> sheer nothing.

*Fan.* Why, shall I not have Folly with me also?

*Cr. Con.* Yea, perde, man, whether that ye ride or go:  
Yet for his name we must find a sleight.

*Fan.* By the mass, he shall hight Conceit.

*Cr. Con.* Not a better name under the sun:  
With Magnificence thou shalt won.

*Fol.* God have mercy, good godfather.

*Cr. Con.* Yet I would that ye had gone rather;  
For, as soon as ye come in Magnificence' sight,  
All measure and good rule is gone quite.

*Fan.* And shall we have liberty to do what we will?

*Cr. Con.* Riot at liberty rusheth it out still.

*Fol.* Yea, but tell me one thing.

*Cr. Con.* What is that?

*Fol.* Who is master of the mash-vat<sup>1</sup>?

*Fan.* Yea, for he hath a full dry soul.

*Cr. Con.* Cock's arms, thou shalt keep the brewhouse bowl.

*Fol.* But may I drink thereof whiles that I stare?

*Cr. Con.* When Measure is gone, what needest thou spare?  
When Measure is gone, we may slay care.

*Fol.* Now then go we hence. "Away the mare . . . !"

[*Exit FOLLY and FANCY.*]

*Stage 2. Scene 19*

*CRAFTY CONVEYANCE alone in the place*

*Cr. Con.* It is wonder to see the world about,

To see what folly is used in every place;

Folly hath a room, I say, in every rout,

To put where he list Folly hath free chace;

Folly and Fancy all where, every man doth face and brace;

Folly footeth it properly, Fancy leadeth the dance;

And next come I after, Counterfeit Countenance.

<sup>1</sup>mashing-vat for malt. A line missing after this ?

Whoso to me giveth good advertence  
 Shall see many things done craftily:  
 By me conveyed in wanton insolence,

Privy pointments conveyed so properly,  
 (For many times much kindness is denied  
 For dread that we dare not oft lest we be spied.)

By me is conveyed mickle pretty ware,  
 Sometime, I say, behind the door for need;  
 I have an hobby can make larks to dare<sup>2</sup>;  
 I knit together many a broken threde.  
 It is great almess the hungry to feed,  
 To clothe the naked where is lacking a smock,  
 Trim at her tail, ere a man can turn a sock:

What ho, be ye merry! was it not well conveyéd?  
 As oft as ye list, so honesty be saved;  
 "Alas, dear heart, look that we be not perceivéd!"  
 Without craft nothing is well behaved;  
 Though I shew you courtesy, say not that I craved,  
 Yet convey it craftily, and hardly spare not for me,  
 So that there know no man, but I and she.

Theft also and petty bribery  
 Without me be full oft espied;  
 My inwit dealing there can no man descry,  
 Convey it by craft, lift and lay aside:  
 Full much flattery and falsehood I hide,  
 And by crafty conveyance I will, an I can,  
 Save a strong thief and hang a true man.

But some men would convey, and con no skill,  
 As malapert taverners that check<sup>3</sup> with their betters,  
 Their conveyance wieldeth the work all by will;  
 And some will take upon them to counterfeit letters,  
 And therewithal convey himself into a pair of fetters;

<sup>1</sup>Line missing.

<sup>2</sup>an hawk that can terrify larks.

<sup>3</sup>taunt.

And some will convey by the pretence of sadness,<sup>1</sup>  
Till all their conveyance is turnéd into madness.

Crafty conveyance is no child's game:

By crafty conveyance many one is brought up of nought;  
Crafty Conveyance can cloak himself from shame,

For by crafty conveyance wonderful things are wrought:

By conveyance crafty I have brought  
Unto Magnificence a full ungracious sort,  
For all hooks<sup>2</sup> unhappy to me have resort.

*Stage 3. Scene 20. DELUSION*

*Enter MAGNIFICENCE with LIBERTY and FELICITY*

*Magn.* Trust me, Liberty, it grieveth me right sore  
To see you thus ruled and stand in such awe.

*Lib.* Sir, as by my will, it shall be so no more.

*Fel.* Yet Liberty without rule is not worth a straw.

*Magn.* Tush, hold your peace, ye speak like a daw!  
Ye shall be occupied, Wealth, at my will.

*Cr. Con.* All that ye say, sir, is reason and skill.

*Magn.* Maister Surveyor, where have ye been so long?

Remember ye not how my Liberty by Measure ruled was?

*Cr. Con.* In good faith, sir, meseemeth he had the more  
wrong.

*Lib.* Mary, sir, so did he exceed and pass,

They drove me to learning like a dull ass.

*Fel.* It is good yet that Liberty be ruled by reason.

*Magn.* Tush, hold your peace, ye speak out of season!

Yourself shall be ruled by Liberty and Largesse.

*Fel.* I am content, so it in measure be.

<sup>1</sup>soberness.

<sup>2</sup>scoundrels.



*Lib.* Must Measure, in the mare's name, you furnish and dress?

*Magn.* Nay, nay, not so, my friend Felicity.

*Cr. Con.* Not, an your grace would be ruled by me.

*Lib.* Nay, he shall be ruled even as I list.

*Fel.* Yet it is good to beware of "Had I list."

*Magn.* Sir, by Liberty and Largesse I will that ye shall

Be governed and guided: wot ye what I say?

*Maister Surveyor*, Largesse to me call.

*Cr. Con.* It shall be done.

*Magn.*

Yea, but bid him come away

At once, and let him not tarry all day.

[*Exit* CRAFTY CONVEYANCE.]

*Fel.* Yet it is good wisdom to work wisely by wealth.

*Lib.* Hold thy tongue, an thou love thy health.

*Magn.* What, will ye waste wind, and prate thus in vain?

Ye have eaten sauce, I trow, at the Tailor's Hall.

*Lib.* Be not too bold, my friend; I counsel you, bear a brain.

*Magn.* And whatso we say, hold your content withall.

*Fel.* Sir, yet without sapience your substance may be small;  
For, where is no measure, how may worship endure?

[*Enter* FANCY.]

*Fan.* Sir, I am here at your pleasure.

Your grace sent for me, I ween; what is your will?

*Magn.* Come hither, Largesse, take here Felicity.

*Fan.* Why, ween you that I can keep him long still?

*Magn.* To rule as ye list, lo here is Liberty.

*Lib.* I am here ready.

*Fan.* What, shall we have Wealth at our guiding to rule as  
we list?

Then farewell thrift, by him that cross kist!

*Fel.* I trust your grace will be agreeable

That I shall suffer none impeachment

By their demenance, nor loss reprobable.

*Magn.* Sir, ye shall follow mine appetite and intent.

*Fel.* So it be by measure I am right well content.

*Fan.* What, all by measure, good sir, and none excess?

*Lib.* Why, wealth hath made many a man brainless.

*Fel.* That was by the means of too much liberty.

*Magn.* What, can ye agree thus and appose?

*Fel.* Sir, as I say, there was no fault in me.

*Lib.* Yea, of Jack a Thrum's babble can ye make a glose<sup>1</sup>?

*Fan.* Sore said, I tell you, and well to the purpose:

What should a man do with you? — lock you under kay.

*Fel.* I say, it is folly to give all wealth away.

*Lib.* Whether should Wealth be ruled by Liberty,

Or Liberty by Wealth? Let see, tell me that.

*Fel.* Sir, as meseemeth, ye should be ruled by me.

*Magn.* What need you with him thus prate and chat?

*Fan.* Shew us your mind then, how to do and what.

*Magn.* I say, that I will ye have him in guiding.

*Lib.* Maister Felicity, let be your chiding,

And so, as ye see it will be no better,

Take it in worth suchè as you find.

*Fan.* What the devil, man, your name shall be the greater,

For Wealth without Largesse is all out of kind.\*

*Lib.* And Wealth is nought worth if Liberty be behind.

*Magn.* Now hold ye content, for there is none other shift.

*Fel.* Then waste must be welcome, and farewell thrift!

*Magn.* Take of his substance a sure inventory,

And get you home together; for Liberty shall bide,

And wait upon me.

*Lib.* And yet for a memory,

Make indentures how ye and I shall guide.

*Fan.* I can do nothing but he stand beside.

*Lib.* Sir, we can do nothing the one without the other.

*Magn.* Well, get you hence then, and send me some other.

\*gloss.

\*i.e. unnatural.

*Fan.* Whom? lusty Pleasure, or merry Conceit?

*Magn.* Nay, first lusty Pleasure is my desire to have,  
And let the other another time await,  
Howbeit, that fond fellow is a merry knave!  
But look that ye occupy the authority that I you gave.

[*Exit FELICITY, LIBERTY, and FANCY.*]

*Stage 3. Scene 21*

*MAGNIFICENCE alone in the place*

For now, sirs, I am like as a prince should be:  
I have Wealth at will, Largesse and Libertie.

Fortune to her laws cannot abandune<sup>1</sup> me,  
But I shall of Fortune rule the rein;  
I fear nothing Fortune's perplexitie;  
All honour to me must needes stoop and lean;  
I sing of two partès without a mean;  
I have wind and weather over all to sail,  
No stormy rage against me can prevail.

Alexander, of Macedony king,  
That all the orient had in subjection,  
Though all his conquests were brought to reckoning,  
Might seem right well under my protection  
To reign, for all his martial affection;  
For I am Prince Peerless, provéd of port,  
Bathéd with bliss, embracéd with comfort.

Syrus, that solemn sire of Babylon,  
That Israel releaséd of their captivitie,  
For all his pomp, for all his royal throne,  
He may not be comparéd unto me.  
I am the diamond doubtless of dignitie:  
Surely it is I that all may save and spill<sup>2</sup>;  
No man so hardy to work against my will.

<sup>1</sup>subject.

<sup>2</sup>destroy.

Porsena, the proud provost of Turkey land,  
 That rated the Romans and made them ill rest,  
 Nor Caesar July, that no man might withstand,  
 Were never half so richly as I am drest:  
 No, that I assure you: look who was the best.  
 I reign in my robés, I rule as me list,  
 I drive down these dastards with a dint of my fist.

Of Cato, the count, accounted the cane,  
 Darius, the doughty chieftain of Persè,  
 I set not by the prowdest of them a prane,<sup>1</sup>  
 Ne by none other that any man can rehearse.  
 I follow in felicitie without reversè.  
 I drede no danger, I dance all in delight:  
 My name is Magnificence, man most of might.

Hercules the hardy, with his stubborn clubbéd mace,  
 That made Cerebus to couch, the cur dog of hell,  
 And Theseus, that proud was Pluto to face,  
 It would not become them with me for to mell:  
 For of all barons bold I bear the bell,  
 Of all doughty, I am doughtiest duke, as I deem:  
 To me all princes to lowt<sup>2</sup> may beseem.

Charlemagne, that maintained the nobles of France,  
 Arthur of Albion, for all his brimmè<sup>3</sup> beard,  
 Nor Basian<sup>4</sup> the bold, for all his bribance,<sup>5</sup>  
 Nor Alaric, that ruléd the Gothiance by sword,  
 Nor no man on mould can make me afeard.  
 What man is so mazéd with me that dare meet,  
 I shall flap him as a fool to fall at my feet.

Galba, whom his gallants garde for to gasp,<sup>6</sup>  
 Nor Nero, that neither set by God nor man,

<sup>1</sup>a prawn.<sup>2</sup>bow.<sup>3</sup>bristly.<sup>4</sup>Antoninus Bassianus Caracalla.<sup>5</sup>pilfering.<sup>6</sup>made to gasp.

Nor Vespasian, that bore in his nose a wasp,  
 Nor Hanibal against Rome gates that ran,  
 Nor yet Scipio, that noble Carthage wan,  
 Nor none so hardy of them with me that durst crake,  
 But I shall frounce them on the foretop, and gar<sup>1</sup> them to  
 quake.

*Stage 3. Scene 22*

*Here cometh in COURTLY ABUSION, doing  
 reverence and courtesy*

*Court. Ab.* At your commandment, sir, with all due reverence.

*Magn.* Welcome, Pleasure, to our magnificence.

*Court. Ab.* Pleaseth it your grace to show what I do shall?

*Magn.* Let us hear of your pleasure to pass the time withal.

*Court. Ab.* Sir, then, with the favour of your benign sufferance

To shew you my mind myself I will advance,  
 If it like your grace to take it in degree.<sup>2</sup>

*Magn.* Yes, sir, so good man in you I see,  
 And in your dealing so good assurance,  
 That we delight greatly in your daliance.

*Court. Ab.* Ah, sir, your grace me doth extol and raise,  
 And far beyond my merits ye me commend and praise;  
 Howbeit, I would be right glad, I you assure,  
 Any thing to do that might be to your pleasure.

*Magn.* As I be saved, with pleasure I am surprised  
 Of your language, it is so well devised;  
 Polishéd and fresh<sup>3</sup> is your ornacy.<sup>4</sup>

*Court. Ab.* I would to God that I were half so crafty,  
 Or in elect utterance half so eloquent,  
 As that I might your noble grace content!

*Magn.* Trust me, with you I am highly pleaséd,  
 For in my favour I have you enfeoffed and seizéd.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>make.

<sup>2</sup>take it kindly.

<sup>3</sup>elegant.

<sup>4</sup>ornate diction.

He is not living your manners can amend;  
 Mary, your speech is as pleasant as though it were penn'd;  
 To hear your commune, it is my high comfort;  
 Point devise all pleasure is your port.

*Court. Ab.* Sir, I am the better of your noble report;  
 But, of your patience under the support,  
 If it would like you to hear my poor mind —

*Magn.* Speak, I beseech thee, leave nothing behind.

*Court. Ab.* So as ye be a prince of great might,  
 It is seeming your pleasure ye delight,  
 And to acquaint you with carnal delectation,  
 And to fall in acquaintance with every new fashion;  
 And quickly your appetites to sharp and address,  
 To fasten your fancy upon a fair mistress,  
 That quickly is envied with rudies of the rose,  
 Inpurtured<sup>1</sup> with features after your purpose;  
 The strains of her veins as Indy azure blue,  
 Enbudded with beauty and colour fresh of hue,  
 As lily-white to look upon her leer,<sup>2</sup>  
 Her eyen relucient as carbuncle so clear,  
 Her mouth embalmed, delectable and merry,  
 Her lusty lips ruddy as the cherry:  
 How like you? ye lack, sir, such a lusty lass.

*Magn.* Ah, that were a baby to 'brace and to bass!

I would I had, by him that hell did harrow,

With me in keeping such a Philip Sparrow!

I would hawk whilst my head did wark,<sup>3</sup>

So I might hobby for such a lusty lark!

These words in mine ear they be so lustily spoken,

That on such a female my flesh would be wroken<sup>4</sup>;

They touch me so thoroughly, and tickle my conceit,

That wried I would be on such a bait:

Ah, Cock's arms, where might such one be found?

*Court. Ab.* Will ye spend any money?

*Magn.* Yea, a thousand pound!

<sup>1</sup>Adorned.

<sup>2</sup>skin.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. until my head did ache.

<sup>4</sup>satiated.

*Court. Ab.* Nay, nay, for less I warrant you to be sped,  
And brought home, and laid in your bed.

*Magn.* Would money, trowest thou, make such one to the  
call?

*Court. Ab.* Money maketh merchants, I tell you, over all.

*Magn.* Why, will a mistress be won for money and for gold?

*Court. Ab.* Why, was not for money Troy both bought and  
sold?

Full many a strong city and town hath been won

By the means of money without any gon.

A mistress, I tell you, is but a small thing;

A goodly ribbon, or a gold ring,

May win with a sawte<sup>2</sup> the fortress of the hold.

But one thing I warn you, press forth and be bold!

*Magn.* Yea, but some be full coy and passing hard-hearted.

*Court. Ab.* But, blessed be our Lord, they will be soon  
converted!

*Magn.* Why, will they then be intreated, the most and the  
least?

*Court. Ab.* Yea, for *omnis mulier meretrix, si celari potest.*<sup>3</sup>

*Magn.* Ah, I have spied ye can much broken sorrow!

*Court. Ab.* I could hold you with such talk hence till to-  
morrow;

But if it like your grace, more at large

Me to permit my mind to discharge,

I would yet shew you further of my conceit.

*Magn.* Let see what ye say, shew it straight.

*Court. Ab.* Wisely let these words in your mind be weighed:

By wayward wilfulness let each thing be conveyed;

Whatsoever ye do, follow your own will;

Be it reason or none, it shall not greatly skill;

Be it right or wrong, by the advise of me,

Take your pleasure and use free libertie;

And if you see anything against your mind,

Then some occasion of quarrel ye must find,

<sup>1</sup>A metaphor from falconry.

<sup>2</sup>assault.

<sup>3</sup>every woman is a whore, if she can be on the sly.

And frown it and face it, as though ye would fight,  
 Fret yourself for anger and for despatch;  
 Hear no man, whatsoever they say,  
 But do as ye list, and take your own way.

*Magn.* Thy words and my mind oddly well accord.

*Court. Ab.* What should ye do else? are not you a lord?

Let your lust and liking stand for a law;  
 Be wresting and writhing, and away draw.

As ye see a man that with him ye be not pleased,  
 And that your mind cannot well be eased,  
 As if a man fortune to touch you on the quick,  
 Then feign yourself diseased and make yourself sick:  
 To stir up your stomach you must you forge,

Call for a cawdle and cast up your gorge,  
 With "Cock's arms, rest shall I none have  
 Till I be revenged on that whoreson knave!  
 Ah, how my stomach wambleth! I am all in a sweat!

Is there no whoreson that knave that will beat?"

*Magn.* By Cock's wounds, a wondrous fellow thou art!

For oft times such a wambling goeth over my heart;

Yet I am not heart-sick, but that me list.

For mirth I have him curried, beaten, and blist,<sup>1</sup>

Him that I loved not and made him to lowt

I am forthwith as whole as a trout –

For such abusion I use now and then.

*Court. Ab.* It is none abusion, sir, in a noble man,

It is a princely pleasure and a lordly mind;

Such lusts at large may not be left behind.

*Stage 3. Scene 23*

*Here cometh in CLOAKED COLLUSION with MEASURE*

*Cl. Col. (aside to MEASURE).* Stand still here, and ye shall see  
 That for your sake I will fall on my knee.

[MEASURE waits at the door.

<sup>1</sup>wounded.



*Court. Ab.* Sir, Sober Sadness cometh, wherefore it be?

*Magn.* Stand up, sir, ye are welcome to me.

*Cl. Col.* Please it your grace, at the contemplation

Of my poor instance and supplication,

Tenderly to consider in your advertence,

Of our blessed Lord, sir, at the reverence,

Remember the good service that Measure hath you done,

And that ye will not cast him away so soon.

*Magn.* My friend, as touching to this your motion,

I may say to you I have but small devotion;

Howbeit, at your instance I will the rather

Do as much as for mine owné father.

*Cl. Col.* Nay, sir, that affection ought to be reserved,

For of your grace I have it nought deserved;

But if it like you that I might round<sup>1</sup> in your ear

To shew you my mind, I would have the less fear.

*Magn.* Stand a little aback, sir, and let him come hither.

*Court. Ab.* With a good will, sir, God speed you both  
together.

*Cl. Col. (aside to MAGNIFICENCE).* Sir, so it is: this man is  
here by,

That for him to labour he hath prayed me heartily;

Notwithstanding to you be it said,

To trust in me he is but disceivéd;

For, so help me God, for you he is not meet:

I speak the softlier, because he should not weet.

*Magn.* Come hither, Pleasure, you shall hear mine intent:

Measure, ye know well, with him I cannot be content,

And surely, as I am now adviséd,

I will have him re-hated and dispiséd.

How say ye, sirs, herein what is best?

*Court. Ab.* By mine advise with you, in faith, he shall not rest

*Cl. Col.* Yet, sir, reserved your better judgement,

It were better he spake with you ere he went,

That he know not but that I have suppléed

All that I can his matter for to speed.

<sup>1</sup>whisper.

*Magn.* Now, by your troth, gave he you not a bribe?

*Cl. Col.* Yes, with his hand I made him to subscribe  
A bill of record for an annual rent.

*Court. Ab.* But for all that he is like to have a glent.<sup>1</sup>

*Cl. Col.* Yea, by my troth, I shall warrant you for me,  
And he may go to the devil; so that I may have my fee,  
What care I?

*Magn.* By the mass, well said.

*Court. Ab.* What force<sup>a</sup> ye, so that ye be paid?

*Cl. Col.* But yet, lo, I would, ere that he went,  
Lest that he thought that his money were evil spent,  
That ye would look on him, though it were not long.

*Magn.* Well canst thou help a priest to sing a song!

*Cl. Col.* So it is all the manner nowadays,  
For to use such hafting and crafty ways.

*Court. Ab.* He telleth you truth, sir, as I you ensure.

*Magn.* Well, for thy sake the better I may endure  
That he come hither, and to give him a look  
That he shall like the worse all this woke.<sup>3</sup>

*Cl. Col.* I care not how soon he be refused,  
So that I may craftily be excused.

*Court. Ab.* Where is he?

*Cl. Col.* Mary, I made him abide,  
Whilst I came to you, a little here beside.

*Magn.* Well, call him, and let us hear him reason,  
And we will be communing in the mean season.

*Court. Ab.* This is a wise man, sir, wheresoever ye had him.

*Magn.* An honest person, I tell you, and a sad.

*Court. Ab.* He can full craftily this matter bring about.

*Magn.* Whilst I have him, I need nothing doubt.

[CLOAKED COLLUSION *brings* MEASURE *forward*,  
while MAGNIFICENCE *looks on him very loftily*.

*Cl. Col.* By the mass, I have done that I can,  
And more than ever I did for any man:  
I trow, ye heard yourself what I said.

<sup>1</sup>fall.

<sup>2</sup>care.

<sup>3</sup>week.

*Meas.* Nay, indeed; but I saw how ye prayed,  
And made instance for me by likelihode.<sup>1</sup>

*Cl. Col.* Nay, I tell you, I am not wont to fode<sup>2</sup>  
Them that dare put their trust in me;  
And thereof ye shall a larger proof see.

*Meas.* Sir, God reward you as ye have deserved:  
But think you with Magnificence I shall be reserved?

*Cl. Col.* By my troth, I cannot tell you that;  
But, an I were as ye, I would not set a gnat  
My Magnificence, nor yet none of his,  
For, go when ye shall, of you shall he miss.

*Meas.* Sir, as ye say.

*Cl. Col.* Nay, come on with me.  
Yet once again I shall fall on my knee  
For your sake, whatsoever befall;  
I set not a fly, and all go to all.

*Meas.* The Holy Ghost be with your grace.

*Cl. Col.* Sir, I beseech you, let pity have some place  
In your breast towards this gentleman.

*Magn.* I was your good lord till that ye began  
So masterfully upon you for to take  
With my servants, and such masteries 'gan make,  
That wholly my mind with you is discontent;  
Wherefore I will that ye be resident  
With me no longer.

*Cl. Col.* Say somewhat now, let see,  
For your self.

*Meas.* Sir, if I might permitted be,  
I would to you say a word or twain.

*Magn.* What, wouldest thou, lurdain, with me brawl again?  
Have him hence, I say, out of my sight;  
That day I see him I shall be worse all night!

*Court. Ab.* Hence, thou haynard, out of the doors fast!

[Here MEASURE goeth out of the place with  
COURTLY ABUSION.

<sup>1</sup>as it appeared.

<sup>2</sup>trick.

## Stage 3. Scene 24

*Magn.* Alas, my stomach fareth as it would cast!

*Cl. Col.* Abide, sir, abide, let me hold your head.

*Magn.* A bowl or a basin, I say, for God's bread!

Ah, my head! But is the whoreson gone?

God give him a mischief! Nay, now let me alone.

*Cl. Col.* A good drift, sir, a pretty feat:

By the good Lord, yet your temples beat.

*Magn.* Nay, so God me help, it was no great vexation,

For I am panged oft times of this same fashion.

*Cl. Col.* Cock's arms, how Pleasure plucked him forth!

*Magn.* Yea, walk he must, it was no better worth.

*Cl. Col.* Sir, now methink your heart is well eased.

*Magn.* Now Measure is gone I am the better pleased.

*Cl. Col.* So to be ruled by Measure, it is a pain!

*Magn.* Mary, I ween he would not be glad to come again!

*Cl. Col.* So I wot not what he should do here:

Where men's bellies is measured, there is no cheer;

For I hear but few men that give any praise

Unto Measure, I say, nowadays.

*Magn.* Measure, tut! what, the devil of hell!

Scantly one with Measure that will dwell.

*Cl. Col.* Not among noble men, as the world goeth:

It is no wonder therefore though ye be wroth

With Measure. Where all nobleness is, there I have past:

They catch that catch may, keep and hold fast,

Out of all measure themselves to enrich:

No force<sup>1</sup> what though his neighbour die in a ditch.

With polling and plucking out of all measure,

Thus must ye stuff and store your treasure.

*Magn.* Yet sometime, parde, I must use largesse.

*Cl. Col.* Yea, mary, sometime in a mess of vergess,<sup>2</sup>

As in a trifle or in a thing of nought,

As giving a thing that ye never bought:

It is the guise now, I say, over all.

Largesse in words, for rewards are but small:

<sup>1</sup>None cares.

<sup>2</sup>verjuice.

To make fair promise, what are ye the worse?  
Let me have the rule of your purse.

*Magn.* I have taken it to Largesse and Libertie.

*Cl. Col.* Then it is done as it should be:

But use your largesse by the advise of me,  
And I shall warrant you wealth and libertie.

*Magn.* Say on, methink your reasons be profound.

*Cl. Col.* Sir, of my counsel this shall be the ground:

To chose out ii. iii. of such as you love best,  
And let all your fancies upon them rest;  
Spare for no cost to give them pound and penny,  
Better to make three rich than for to make many;  
Give them more than enough and let them not lack,  
And as for all other let them truss and pack;  
Pluck from an hundred, and give it to three,  
Let neither patent 'scape them nor fee;

And wheresoever you will fall to a reckoning,  
Those three will be ready even at your beckoning,  
For them shall you have at liberty to lowt;  
Let them have all, and the other go without:  
Thus joy without measure you shall have.

*Magn.* Thou sayst truth, by the heart that God me gave!

For, as thou sayst, right so shall it be:

And here I make thee upon Libertie

To be supervisor, and on Largesse also,

For as thou wilt, so shall the game go;

For in Pleasure, and Surveyance, and also in thee

I have set my whole felicitie,

And such as you will shall lack no promotion.

*Cl. Col.* Sir, sith that in me ye have such devotion,

Committing to me and to my fellows twain

Your wealth and felicity, I trust we shall obtain

To do you service after your appetite.

*Magn.* In faith, and your service right well I shall acquite;

And therefore hie you hence, and take this oversight.

*Cl. Col.* Now, Jesu preserve you, sir, prince most of might!

[Exit CLOAKED COLLUSION.]

## Stage 3. Scene 25

*Magn.* Thus, I say, I am environed with solace;  
 I dread no dints of fatal destiny.  
 Well were that lady might stand in my grace,  
 Me to embrace and love most specially:  
 Ah, Lord, so I would halse her heartily,  
 So I would clepe her, so I would kiss her sweet!

*Enter FOLLY*

*Fol.* Mary, Christ grant ye catch no cold on your feet!

*Magn.* Who is this?

*Fol.* Conceit, sir, your own man.

*Magn.* What tidings with you, sir? I befool thy brain-pan!

*Fol.* By our lakin, sir, I have been a hawking for the wild swan.

My hawk is ramage,<sup>1</sup> and it happed that she ran –

Flew I should say – into an old barn

To reach at a rat, I could not her warn;

She pinched her pinion, by God, and catchéd harm:

It was a runner; nay, fool, I warrant her blood warm!

*Magn.* Ah, sir, thy gerfalcon and thou be hanged together!

*Fol.* And, sir, as I was coming to you hither,

I saw a fox suck on a cow's udder,

And with a lime-rod I took them both together.

I trow it be a frost, for the way is slither:

See, for God avow, for cold as I chither.

*Magn.* Thy words hang together as feathers in the wind.

*Fol.* Ah, sir, told I not you how I did find

A knave and a churl, and all of one kind?

I saw a weathercock wag with the wind;

Great marvel I had, and mused in my mind;

The hounds ran before, and the hare behind;

I saw a losell lead a lurdain, and they were both blind;

I saw a sowter<sup>2</sup> go to supper ere ever he had dined.

*Magn.* By Cock's heart, thou art a fine merry knave!

*Fol.* I make God avow, ye will none other men have.

<sup>1</sup>wild, coy.

<sup>2</sup>cobbler.

*Magn.* What sayst thou?

*Fol.* Mary, I pray God your mastership to save:  
I shall give you a gaud<sup>1</sup> of a gosling that I have,  
The gander and the goose both grazing on one grave;  
Then Rowland the reve<sup>2</sup> ran, and I began to rave,  
And with a bristle of a boar his beard did I shave.

*Magn.* If ever I heard such another, God give me shame!

*Fol.* Sim Saddlegoose was my sire, and Dawcock my dame:  
I could, an I list, gar<sup>3</sup> you laugh at a game,  
How a woodcock wrestled with a lark that was lame:  
The bittern said boldly that they were to blame;  
The fieldfare would have fiddled, and it would not frame;  
The crane and the curlew thereat 'gan to grame<sup>4</sup>;  
The snite snivled in the snout and smiled at the game.

*Magn.* Cock's bones, heard you ever such another!

*Fol.* See, sir, I beseech you, Largesse my brother.

*Enter FANCY*

*Magn.* What tidings with you, sir, that you look so sad?

*Fan.* When ye know what I know ye will not be glad!

*Fol.* What, brother brainsick, how farest thou?

*Magn.* Yea, let be thy japes, and tell me how  
The case requireth.

*Fan.* Alas, alas, an heavy meeting!  
I would tell you, an if I might for weeping.

*Fol.* What, is all your mirth now turned to sorow?  
Farewell till soon, adew till to-morrow.

[*Exit FOLLY.*

*Magn.* I pray thee, Largesse, let be thy sobbing.

*Fan.* Alas, sir, ye are undone with stealing and robbing!  
Ye sent us a supervisor for to take heed:  
Take heed of yourself, for now ye have need.

*Magn.* What, hath Sadness beguiled me so?

*Fan.* Nay, madness hath beguiled you and many mo;  
For Liberty is gone and also Felicitie.

<sup>1</sup>jest.

<sup>2</sup>bailliff.

<sup>3</sup>make.

<sup>4</sup>grieve.

*Magn.* Gone? alas, ye have undone me!

*Fan.* Nay, he that sent us, Cloakéd Collusion,  
And your painted Pleasure, Courtly Abusion,  
And your demeanour with Counterfeit Countenance,  
And your surveyor, Crafty Conveyance,  
Ere ever we were ware brought us in adversity,  
And hath robbed you quite from all felicity.

*Magn.* Why, is this the largesse that I have uséd?

*Fan.* Nay, it was your fondness that ye have uséd.

*Magn.* And is this the credence that I gave to the letter?

*Fan.* Why, could not your wit serve you no better?

*Magn.* Why, who would have thought in you such guile?

*Fan.* What? yes, by the rood, sir, it was I all this while  
That you trusted, and Fancy is my name;  
And Folly, my brother, that made you much game.

*Here cometh in ADVERSITY*

*Magn.* Alas, who is yonder, that so grimly lookès?

*Fan.* Adew, for I will not come in his clutches.

[*Exit FANCY.*]

*Stage 4. Scene 26. OVERTHROW*

*Magn.* Lord, so my flesh trembleth now for drede!

[*Here MAGNIFICENCE is beaten down, and spoiled  
from all his goods and raiment.*]

*Adver.* I am Adversity, that for thy misdeed  
From God am sent to 'quite thee thy mede.  
Vile vilyard,<sup>1</sup> thou must not now my dint withstand,  
Thou must abide the dint of my hand:  
Lie there, losell, for all thy pomp and pride;  
Thy pleasure now with pain and trouble shall be tried.  
The stroke of God, Adversity I hight;  
I pluck down king, prince, lord, and knight,

<sup>1</sup>old man.



I rush at them roughly, and make them lie full low,  
And in their most trust I make them overthrow.  
This losell was a lord, and livéd at his lust,  
And now, like a lurdain, he lieth in the dust:  
He knew not himself, his heart was so high;  
Now is there no man that will set by him a fly:  
He was wont to boast, brag, and to brace;  
Now dare he not for shame look one in the face:  
All wordly wealth for him too little was;  
Now hath he right nought, naked as an ass:  
Sometime without measure he trusted in gold,  
And now without measure he shall have hunger and cold.  
Lo, sirs, thus I handle them all  
That follow their fancies in folly to fall:  
Man or woman, of what estate they be,  
I counsel them beware of Adversitie.  
Of sorrowful servants I have many scores:  
I visit them sometimes with blains and with sores;  
With botches and carbuncles in care I them knit;  
With the gowt I make them to groan where they sit;  
Some I make lepers and lazars full hoarse;  
And from that they love best some I divorce;  
Some with the marmoll<sup>1</sup> to halt I them make;  
And some to cry out of the bone-ache;  
And some I visit with burning of fire;  
Of some I wring of the neck like a wire;  
And some I make in a rope to totter and walter<sup>2</sup>;  
And some for to hang themself in a halter;  
And some I visit with battle, war, and murther,  
And make each man to slay the other;  
To drown or to slay themself with a knife;  
And all is for their ungracious life.  
Yet sometime I strike where is none offence,  
Because I would prove men of their patience.  
But, nowadays, to strike I have great cause,  
Lidderns so little set by God's laws.

<sup>1</sup>ulcers.<sup>2</sup>tumble.

Fathers and mothers, that be negligent,  
And suffer their children to have their intent,  
To guide them virtuously that will not remember,  
Them or their children oft time I dismember;  
Their children because that they have no meekness;  
I visit their fathers and mothers with sickness;  
And if I see thereby they will not amend,  
Then mischief suddenly I them send;  
For there is nothing that more displeaseth God  
Than from their children to spare the rod  
Of correction, but let them have their will.  
Some I make lame, and some I do kill;  
And some I strike with a frenzy;  
Of some of their children I strike out the eye;  
And where the father by wisdom worship hath won,  
I send oft times a fool to be his son.  
Wherefore of Adversity look ye be ware,  
For when I come cometh sorrow and care:  
For I strike lords of realms and lands  
That rule not by measure that they have in their hands,  
That sadly rule not their household men;  
I am God's prepositor,<sup>1</sup> I print them with a pen;  
Because of their negligence and of their wanton vages,<sup>2</sup>  
I visit them and strike them with many sore plagues.  
To take, sirs, example of that I you tell,  
And beware of Adversity by my counsell,  
Take heed of this caitif that lieth here on ground;  
Behold, how Fortune on him hath frowned!  
For though we shew you this in game and play,  
Yet it proveth earnest, ye may see, every day.  
For now will I from this caitif go,  
And take mischief and vengeance of other mo  
That hath deserved it as well as he.  
Ho, where art thou? come hither, Povertie,  
Take this caitif to thy lore.

[Exit.]

<sup>1</sup>A scholar that is an overseer.<sup>2</sup>vagaries.

*Stage 4. Scene 27**Enter POVERTY*

*Pover.* Ah, my bones ache, my limbs be sore;  
Alas, I have the sciatica full evil in my hip!  
Alas, where is youth that was wont for to skip?  
I am lowsy, and unliking, and full of scurf,  
My colour is tawny, coloured as turf.  
I am Poverty, that all men doth hate,  
I am baited with dogs at every man's gate;  
I am ragged and rent, as ye may see;  
Full few but they have envy at me.  
Now must I this carcass lift up:  
He dinéd with delight, with Poverty he must sup.  
Rise up, sir, and welcome unto me.

*[Here he goeth to lift up MAGNIFICENCE, and places  
a coverlet over him.]*

*Magn.* Alas, where is now my gold and fee?  
Alas, I say, whereto am I brought?  
Alas, alas, alas, I die for thought!

*Pover.* Sir, all this would have been thought on before:  
He woteth not what wealth is that never was sore.

*Magn.* Fie, fie, that ever I should be brought in this snare!  
I wenéd once never to have knowen care.

*Pover.* Lo, such is this world! I find it writ,  
In wealth to beware, and that is wit.

*Magn.* In wealth to beware, if I had had grace,  
Never had I been brought in this case.

*Pover.* Now, sith it will no other be,  
All that God sendeth, take it in gre';  
For, though you were sometime of noble estate,  
Now must you learn to beg at every man's gate.

*Magn.* Alas, that ever I should be so shamed!  
Alas, that ever I Magnificence was named!

'in good part.

Alas, that ever I was so hard happed,  
In misery and wretchedness thus to be lapped!  
Alas, that I could not myself no better guide!  
Alas, in my cradle that I had not died!

*Pover.* Yea, sir, yea, leave all this rage,  
And pray to God your sorrows to assuage:  
It is folly to grudge against his visitation.

With heart contrite make your suplication  
Unto your Maker, that made both you and me,  
And, when it pleaseth God, better may be.

*Magn.* Alas, I wot not what I should pray!

*Pover.* Remember you better, sir, beware what ye say,  
For dread ye displease the high Dietie.

Put your will in his will, for surely it is he  
That may restore you again to felicitie,  
And bring you again out of adversitie.

Therefore poverty look patiently ye take,  
And remember he suffered much more for your sake,  
Howbeit of all sin he was innocent,  
And ye have deserved this punishment.

*Magn.* Alas, with cold my limbs shall be marred!

*Pover.* Yea, sir, now must ye learn to lie hard,  
That was wont to lie on feather-beds of down;  
Now must your feet lie higher than your crown:  
Where you were wont to have caudles for your head,  
Now must you munch mammocks<sup>1</sup> and lumps of bread;  
And where you had changes of rich array,  
Now lap you in a coverlet full fain that ye may;  
And where that ye were pumped with what ye wold,  
Now must ye suffer both hunger and cold:  
With courtly silks ye were wont to be draw,  
Now must ye learn to lie on the straw;  
Your skin that was wrapped in shirts of Rennes,  
Now must ye be storm ybeaten with showers and rains;  
Your head that was wont to be happed most droopy and drowsy,  
Now shall ye be scabbéd, scurvy, and lowsy.

<sup>1</sup>leavings.

*Magn.* Fie on this world, full of treachery,  
That ever nobleness should lie thus wretchedly!

*Pover.* Sir, remember the turn of Fortune's wheel,  
That wantonly can wink, and winch: with her heel.  
Now she will laugh, forthwith she will frown;  
Suddenly set up, and suddenly plucked down:  
She danceth variance with mutability;  
Now all in wealth, forthwith in poverty;

In her promise there is no sikerness<sup>2</sup>;  
All her delight is set in doubleness.

*Magn.* Alas, of Fortune I may well complain!

*Pover.* Yea, sir, yesterday will not be calléd again:  
But yet, sir, now in this case,  
Take it meekly, and thank God of his grace;  
For now go I will beg for you some meat;  
It is folly against God for to plead;  
I will walk now with my begger's bags,  
And wrap you the whiles with these homely rags.

[*Going away, he says these words:*

Ah, how my limbs be lither<sup>3</sup> and lame!  
Better it is to beg than to be hanged with shame;  
Yet many had liefer hangéd be,  
Than for to beg their meat for charitie:  
They think it no shame to rob and steal,  
Yet were they better to beg a great deal;  
For by robbing they run in *manus tuas* queck,<sup>4</sup>  
But begging is better medicine for the neck;  
Yea, mary, is it, yea, so may I go.  
Ah, Lord God, how the gowt wringeth me by the toe!

[*Exit.*

<sup>1</sup>kick.

<sup>2</sup>surety.

<sup>3</sup>bad.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. get themselves quickly hanged, and say, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

*Stage 4. Scene 28**Here MAGNIFICENCE dolorously maketh his moan**Magn.* O feeble fortune, O doleful destiny!

O hateful hap, O careful cruelty!

O sighing sorrow, O thoughtful misery!

O redless<sup>1</sup> ruth, O painful poverty!

O dolorous heart, O hard adversity!

O odious distress, O deadly pain and woe!

For worldly shame I wax both wan and blo.<sup>2</sup>

Where is now my wealth and my noble estate?

Where is now my treasure, my lands, and my rent?

Where is now all my servants that I had here of late?

Where is now my gold upon them that I spent?

Where is now all my rich habiliment?

Where is now my kin, my friends, and my noble blood

Where is now all my pleasure and my wordly good?

Alas, my folly! alas, my wanton will!

I may no more speak, till I have weapt my fill.

*Stage 4. Scene 29**Here cometh in LIBERTY**Lib.* With, yea mary, sirs, thus should it be:

I kissed her sweet, and she kisséd me;

I danced the darling on my knee;

I gard her gasp, I gard he gle,<sup>3</sup>

With "Dance on the lea, the lea!"

I bassed that baby with heart so free;

She is the bote of all my bale<sup>4</sup>:Ah so! that sigh was far-fet<sup>5</sup>!

To love that lovesome I will not let;

<sup>1</sup>unavailing.<sup>2</sup>livid.<sup>3</sup>wink.<sup>4</sup>remedy of all my sorrow.<sup>5</sup>far-fetched.

My heart is wholly on her set:

I plucked her by the patlet<sup>1</sup>;

At my devise I with her met;

My fancy fairly on her I set;

So merrily singeth the nightingale!

In lust and liking my name is Libertie:

I am desired with highest and lowest degree;

I live as me list, I leap out at large;

Of earthly thing I have no care nor charge;

I am president of princes, I prick them with pride:

What is he living that Liberty would lack?

A thousand pound with Liberty may hold no tack;

At liberty a man may be bold for to break;

Wealth without liberty goeth all to wreak.

But yet, sirs, hardly<sup>2</sup> one thing learn of me:

I warn you beware of too much libertie,

For *totum in toto*<sup>3</sup> is not worth an haw;

Too hardy, or too much, too free of the daw<sup>4</sup>;

Too sober, too sad, too subtil, too wise;

Too merry, too mad, too gigling, too nice<sup>5</sup>;

Too full of fancies, too lordly, too proud;

Too homely, too holy, too lewd, and too lowd;

Too flattering, too smattering, too too out of har<sup>6</sup>;

Too clattering, too chattering, too short, and too far;

Too jetting, too jaggling, and too full of japes;

Too mocking, too mowing,<sup>7</sup> too like a jacknapes:

Thus *totum in toto* groweth up, as ye may see,

By means of madness, and too much libertie;

For I am a virtue, if I be well uséd,

And I am a vice where I am abuséd.

*Magn.* Ah, woe worth thee, Liberty, now thou sayst full true!

That I used thee too much, sore may I rue.

*Lib.* What, a very vengeance, I say, who is that?

What brothel,<sup>8</sup> I say, is yonder bound in a mat?

<sup>1</sup>neckerchief.

<sup>2</sup>assuredly.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. excess.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. too much fooling.

<sup>5</sup>wanton.

<sup>6</sup>out of joint.

<sup>7</sup>mimicking.

<sup>8</sup>wretch.

*Magn.* I am Magnificence, that sometime thy master was.

*Lib.* What, is the world thus come to pass?

Cock's arms, sirs, will ye not see

How he is undone by the means of me?

For if Measure had ruled Liberty as he began,

This lurdain that here lieth had been a nobleman.

But he abused so his free liberty,

That now he hath lost all his felicity,

Not thorough largesse of liberal expence,

But by the way of fancy insolence;

For liberality is most convenient

A prince to use with all his whole intent,

Largely rewarding them that have deservéd,

And so shall a nobleman nobly be servéd.

But nowadays as hucksters they huck and they stick,

And pinch at the payment of a pudding prick<sup>1</sup>;

A laudable largesse, I tell you, for a lord,

To prate for the patching of a potshord!

Spare for the 'spence of a noble,<sup>2</sup> that his honour might save,

And spend hundreds for the pleasure of a knave!

But so long they reckon with their reasons amiss

That they lose their liberty and all that there is.

*Magn.* Alas, that ever I occupied such abusion!

*Eib.* Yea, for now it hath brought thee to confusion:

For, where I am occupied and used wilfully,

It cannot continue long prosperously;

As evidently in reckless youth you may see,

How many come to mischief for too much liberty;

And some in the world their brain is so idle

That they set their children to run on the bridle,

In youth to be wanton and let them have their will;

An they never thrive in their age, it shall not greatly skill.

Some fall to folly themselves for to spill,

And some fall preaching at the Tower Hill;

Some hath so much liberty of one thing and other

That neither they set by father nor mother;

<sup>1</sup>skewer that fastens the pudding-bag.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. the coin so called.



Some have so much liberty that they fear no sin,  
 Till, as ye see many times, they shame all their kin.  
 I am so lusty to look on, so fresh, and so free,  
 That nuns will leave their holiness, and run after me;  
 Friars with folly I make them so fain,  
 They cast up their obedience to catch me again,  
 At liberty to wander and walk over all,  
 That lustily they leap sometime their cloister wall.

[*Here someone blows a horn behind the audience.*

Yonder is a whoreson for me doth rechate:  
 Adew, sirs, for I think lest that I come too late.

[*Here LIBERTY goes out.*

*Magn.* O good Lord, how long shall I endure  
 This misery, this careful wretchedness?  
 Of worldly wealth, alas, who can be sure?  
 In Fortune's friendship there is no steadfastness:  
 She hath deceived me with her doubleness.  
 For to be wise all men may learn of me,  
 In wealth to beware of hard adversitie.

[*Here cometh in CRAFTY CONVEYANCE and CLOAKED  
 COLLUSION, with a lusty laughter.*

*Cr. Con.* Ha, ha, ha! for laughter I am like to brast.

*Cl. Col.* Ha, ha, ha! for sport I am like to spew and cast.

*Cr. Con.* What hath thou gotten, in faith, to thy share?

*Cl. Col.* In faith, of his coffers the bottoms are bare.

*Cr. Con.* As for his plate and silver, and such trash,  
 I warrant you, I have given it a lash.

*Cl. Col.* What, then he may drink out of a stone cruse?

*Cr. Con.* With, yea, sir, by Jesu that slain was with Jews!  
 He may rince a pitcher, for his plate is to wed.\*

*Cl. Col.* In faith, and he may dream on a dagswane for any  
 feather-bed.

*Cr. Con.* By my troth, we have rifled him meetly well!

\*sound a retreat (in hunting).

\*pledged,

*Cl. Col.* Yea, but thank me thereof every deal.

*Cr. Con.* Thank thee thereof, in the devil's date!

*Cl. Col.* Leave thy prating, or else I shall lay thee on the pate.

*Cr. Con.* Nay, to wrangle, I warrant thee, it is but a stone caste.

*Cl. Col.* By the mass, I shall cleave thy head to the waist.

*Cr. Con.* Yea, wilt thou cleanly cleave me in the clift with thy nose?

*Cl. Col.* I shall thrust in thee my dagger –

*Cr. Con.* Thorough the leg into the hose.

*Cl. Col.* Nay, whoreson, here is my glove; take it up, an thou dare.

*Cr. Con.* Turd, thou art good to be a man of war!

*Cl. Col.* I shall skelp thee on the scalp; lo, seest thou that?

*Cr. Con.* What, wilt thou skelp me? thou dare not look on a gnat.

*Cl. Col.* By Cock's bones, I shall bliss<sup>1</sup> thee, an thou be too bold.

*Cr. Con.* Nay, then thou wilt ding the devil, an thou be not hold.<sup>2</sup>

*Cl. Col.* But wottest thou, whoreson? I rede<sup>3</sup> thee to be wise.

*Cr. Con.* Now I rede thee beware, I have warned thee twice.

*Cl. Col.* Why, wendest thou that I forbear thee for thine own sake?

*Cr. Con.* Peace, or I shall wring thy be in a brake?

*Cl. Col.* Hold thy hand, daw, off thy dagger, and stint of thy din,

Or I shall fawchin<sup>4</sup> thy flesh, and scrape thee on the skin.

*Cr. Con.* Yea, wilt thou, hangman? I say, thou cavell<sup>5</sup>!

*Cl. Col.* Nay, thou rude ravener, rain-beated javell!

*Cr. Con.* What, thou Colin Coward, knowen and tried!

*Cl. Col.* Nay, thou false-hearted dastard, thou dare not abide!

*Cr. Con.* And if there were none to displease but thou and I, Thou should not 'scape, whoreson, but thou should die.

<sup>1</sup>wound.

<sup>2</sup>holden.

<sup>3</sup>advise.

<sup>4</sup>cut.

<sup>5</sup>A horse (properly).

*Cl. Col.* Nay, I shall wring thee, whoreson, on the wrist.

*Cr. Con.* Mary, I defy thy best and thy worst.

[*Here cometh in COUNTERFEIT COUNTENANCE.*

*C. Count.* What, a very vengeance, need all these words?

Go together by the heads, and give me your swords.

*Cl. Col.* So he is the worst brawler that ever was born.

*Cr. Con.* In faith, so to suffer thee, it is but a scorn.

*C. Count.* Now let us be all one, and let us live in rest,

För we be, sirs, but a few of the best.

*Cl. Col.* By the mass, man, thou shalt find me reasonable.

*Cr. Con.* In faith, and I will be to reason agreeable.

*C. Count.* Then I trust to God and the holy rood,

Here shall be no great shedding of blood.

*Cl. Col.* By our lakin, sir, not by my will.

*Cr. Con.* By the faith that I owe to God, and I will sit still.

*C. Count.* Well said. But, in faith, what was your quarrel?

*Cl. Col.* Mary, sir, this gentleman called me a javell.

*Cr. Con.* Nay, by Saint Mary, it was ye called me knave.

*Cl. Col.* Mary, so ungodly language you me gave.

*C. Count.* Ah, we shall have more of this matter yet?

Methink ye are not greatly encumbered with wit.

*Cr. Con.* God's foot, I warrant you I am a gentleman born,

And thus to be faced<sup>1</sup> I think it great scorn.

*C. Count.* I cannot well tell of your dispositions;

An ye be a gentleman, ye have knave's conditions.

*Cl. Col.* By God, I tell you I will not be out-facéd!

*Cr. Con.* By the mass, I warrant thee, I will not be braced.

*C. Count.* Tush, tush, it is a great default:

The one of you is too proud, the other is too haut.

Tell me briefly whereupon ye began.

*Cl. Col.* Mary, sir, he said that he was a prettier man

Than I was in opening of locks;

And, I tell you, I disdain much of his mocks.

*Cr. Con.* Thou saw never yet but I did my part,

The lock of a casket to make for to start.

<sup>1</sup>out-faced.

*G. Count.* Nay, I know well enough ye are both well-handed  
To grope a gardevians,<sup>1</sup> though it be well banded.

*Cl. Col.* I am the better yet in a budget.

*Cr. Con.* And I the better in a male.

*G. Count.* Tush, these matters that ye move are but sops in ale:  
Your trimming and tramming by me must be tangéd,  
For, had I not been, ye both had been hangéd,  
When we with Magnificence goods made chevisance.<sup>2</sup>

*Magn.* And therefore our Lord send you a very vengeance!

*G. Count.* What begger art thou that thus doth bane and  
warry?

*Magn.* Ye be the thieves, I say, away my goods did carry.

*Cl. Col.* Cock's bones, thou begger, what is thy name?

*Magn.* Magnificence I was, whom ye have brought to shame.

*G. Count.* Yea, but trow you, sirs, that this is he?

*Cr. Con.* Go we near, and let us see.

*Cl. Col.* By Cock's bones, it is the same.

*Magn.* Alas, alas, sirs, ye are to blame!

I was your master, though ye think it scorn,  
And now on me ye gaure<sup>3</sup> and sporn.

*G. Count.* Lie still, lie still now, with ill-hail<sup>4</sup>!

*Cr. Con.* Yea, for thy language cannot thee avail.

*Cl. Col.* Abide, sir, abide, I shall make him to piss.

*Magn.* Now give me somewhat, for God's sake I crave!

*Cr. Con.* In faith, I give thee four quarters of a knave.

*G. Count.* In faith, and I bequeath him the tooth-ache.

*Cl. Col.* And bequeath him the bone-ache.

*Cr. Con.* And bequeath him the gowt and the gin.

*Cl. Col.* And bequeath him sorrow for his sin.

*G. Count.* And I give him Christ's curse,  
With never a penny in his purse.

*Cr. Con.* And I give him the cough, the mur,<sup>5</sup> and the  
pose.<sup>6</sup>

*Cl. Col.* Yea, for *requiam aeternam* grow'th forth of his nose.  
But now let us make merry and good cheer!

*G. Count.* And to the tavern let us draw near.

<sup>1</sup>trunk. <sup>2</sup>booty. <sup>3</sup>stare. <sup>4</sup>ill-health. <sup>5</sup>bad cold. <sup>6</sup>catarrh.

*Cr. Con.* And from thence to the half street,<sup>1</sup>  
To get us there some fresh meat.

*Cl. Col.* Why, is there any store of raw mutton?<sup>2</sup>

*C. Count.* Yea, in faith, or else thou art too great a glutton!

*Cr. Con.* But they say it is a queasy meat;  
It will strike a man mischievously in a heat.

*Cl. Col.* In fay, man, some ribs of the mutton be so rank  
That they will fire one ungraciously in the flank.

*C. Count.* Yea, and when ye come out of the shop,  
Ye shall be clappéd with a colop,  
That will make you to halt and to hop.

*Cr. Con.* Some be rested there that they think on it forty days,  
For there be whorès there at all assays.

*Cl. Col.* For the passion of God, let us go thither!

*[And they go hurriedly out of the place.]*

*Magn.* Alas, mine own servants to shew me such reproach,  
Thus to rebuke me, and have me in despight!

So shamefully to me, their master, to approach,  
That sometime was a noble prince of might!

Alas, to live longer I have no delight!

For to live in misery it is harder than death:

I am weary of the world, for unkindness me sleth.

*Stage 4. Scene 31*

*Here DESPAIR comes in*

*Des.* Despair is my name, that Adversity doth follow:

In time of distress I am ready at hand;

I make heavy hearts with eyen full hollow;

Of fervent charity I quench out the brand;

Faith and Goodhope I make aside to stand;

In God's mercy, I tell them, is but folly to trust;

All grace and pitie I lay in the dust.

<sup>1</sup>Bankside, Southwark, where the brothels were.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. whores.

What, liest thou there lingering, lewdly and loathsome?

It is too late now thy sins to repent;

Thou hast been so wayward, so wrangling, and so wrathsome,

And so far thou art behind of thy rent,

And so ungraciously thy days thou hast spent,

That thou art not worthy to look God in the face.

*Magn.* Nay, nay, man, I look never to have part of his grace;

For I have so ungraciously my life misused,

Though I ask mercy, I needs be refused.

*Des.* No, no, for thy sins be so exceeding far,

So innumerable and so full of despight,

And against thy Maker thou hast made such war,

That thou canst not have never mercy in his sight.

*Magn.* Alas, my wickedness, that may I wite!<sup>1</sup>

But now I see well there is no better rede,<sup>2</sup>

But sigh and sorrow, and wish myself dede.

*Des.* Yea, rid thyself, rather than this life for to lead;

The world waxeth weary of thee, thou livest too long.

*Here MISCHIEF comes in*

*Mis.* And I, Mischief, am comen at need,

Out of thy life thee for to lead:

And look that it be not long

Ere that thyself thou go hong

With this halter good and strong;

Or else with this knife cut out a thong

Of thy throat-bowl, and rid thee out of pain:

Thou art not the first himself hath slain.

Lo, here is thy knife and a halter! and, ere we go further,

Spare not thyself, but boldly thee murder.

*Des.* Yea, have done at once without delay.

*Magn.* Shall I myself hang with an halter? nay;

<sup>1</sup>blame.

<sup>2</sup>counsel.

Nay, rather will I chose to rid me of this life  
In sticking myself with this fair knife.

[Here MAGNIFICENCE would slay himself with a knife.]

*Mis.* Alarum, alarum! too long we abide!

*Des.* Out, harrow, hell burneth! where shall I me hide?

Stage 5. Scene 32. RESTORATION

Here GOODHOPE comes in, DESPAIR and MISCHIEF flee  
away: GOODHOPE snatches away the knife, and says:

*Good.* Alas, dear son, sore cumbered is thy mind,  
Thyself that thou would slay against nature and kind!

*Magn.* Ah, blessed may ye be, sir! what shall I you call?

*Good.* Goodhope, sir, my name is; remedy principall  
Against all sautes<sup>1</sup> of your ghostly foe.

Who knoweth me, himself may never slo.

*Magn.* Alas, sir, so I am lapped in adversitie,  
That Despair well nigh had mischieved me!

For, had ye not the sooner been my refuge,  
Of damnation I had been drawn in the luge.<sup>2</sup>

*Good.* Undoubted ye had lost yourself eternally.  
There is no man may sin more mortally

Than of wanhope<sup>3</sup> through the unhappy ways,  
By mischief to breviate and shorten his days.

But, my good son, learn from Despair to flee,  
Wind you from wanhope, and acquaint you with me.

A great misadventure, thy Maker to displease,  
Thyself mischieving to thine endless disease!

There was never so hard a storm of misery  
But through Goodhope there may come remedy.

*Magn.* Your words be more sweeter than any precious nard,  
They mollify so easily my heart that was so hard;

There is no balm, ne gum of Araby  
More delectable than your language to me.

<sup>1</sup>assaults.

<sup>2</sup>abode.

<sup>3</sup>want of hope.

*Good.* Sir, your physician is the grace of God,  
 That you hath punished with his sharp rod.  
 Goodhope, your 'pothecary assigned am I:  
 That God's grace hath vexed you sharply,  
 And pained you with a purgation of odious poverty,  
 Mixed with bitter aloes of hard adversity;  
 Now must I make you an electuary soft,  
 I to minister it, you to receive it oft,  
 With rhubarb of repentance in you for to rest;  
 With drams of devotion your diet must be drest;  
 With gums ghostly of glad heart and mind,  
 To thank God of his sond,<sup>1</sup> and comfort ye shall find.  
 Put from you presumption and admit humility,  
 And heartily thank God of your adversity;  
 And love that Lord that for your love was dead,  
 Wounded from the foot to the crown of the head:  
 For who loveth God can ail nothing but good;  
 He may help you, he may mend your mood:  
 Prosperity by him is given solaciously to man,  
 Adversity by him therewith now and then;  
 Health of body his business to achieve,  
 Disease and sickness his conscience to discrieve,<sup>2</sup>  
 Affliction and trouble to prove his patience,  
 Contradiction to prove his sapience,  
 Grace of assistance his measure to declare,  
 Sometime to fall, another time to beware.  
 And now ye have had, sir, a wonderous fall,  
 To learn you hereafter for to beware withall.  
 How say you, sir? can ye these words grope?  
*Magn.* Yea, sir, now am I armed with goodhope,  
 And sore I repent me of my wilfulness;  
 I ask God mercy of my negligess,  
 Under Goodhope enduring ever still,  
 Me humbly committing unto God's will.  
*Good.* Then shall you be soon delivered from distress,  
 For now I see coming to youward Redress.

<sup>1</sup>sending.<sup>2</sup>discover.



*Stage 5. Scene 33**Here REDRESS comes in**Red.* Christ be among you, and the Holy Ghost!*Good.* He be your conduct, the Lord of might's most.*Red.* Sir, is your patient anything amended?*Good.* Yea, sir, he is sorry for that he hath offended.*Red.* How feel you yourself, my friend? how is your mind?*Magn.* A wretched man, sir, to my Maker unkind.*Red.* Yea, but have ye repented with heart contrite?*Magn.* Sir, the repentance I have no man can write.*Red.* And have ye banished from you all despair?*Magn.* Yea, wholly to Goodhope I have made my repare.*Good.* Questionless he doth me assure

In goodhope alway for to endure.

*Red.* Then stand up, sir, in God's name!

And I trust to ratify and amend your fame.

Goodhope, I pray you with hearty affection

To send over to me Sad Circumspection.

*Good.* Sir, your request shall not be delayed.*[He goes out.]**Red.* Now surely, Magnificence, I am right well apayed

Of that I see you now in the state of grace;

Now shall ye be renewed with solace:

Take now upon you this habiliment,

And to that I say give good advertisement.<sup>1</sup>*[MAGNIFICENCE takes the garment.]**Magn.* To your request I shall be comformable.*Red.* First, I say, with mind firm and stable

Determine to amend all your wanton excess,

And be ruled by me, which am called Redress.

Redress my name is, that little am I used

As the world requireth, but rather I am refused.

Redress should be at the reckoning in every account,

And specially to redress that were out of joint.

<sup>1</sup>heed.

Full many things there be that lacketh redress,  
 The which were too long now to express;  
 But redress is redless,<sup>1</sup> and may do no correction.  
 Now welcome, forsooth, Sad Circumspection.

*Stage 5. Scene 34*

*Here cometh in SAD CIRCUMSPECTION, saying:*

*Sad Cir.* Sir, after your message I hied me hither straight,  
 For to understand your pleasure and also your mind.

*Red.* Sir, to acquaint you the continue of my conceit,  
 Is from adversity Magnificence to unbind.

*Sad Cir.* How fortunéd you, Magnificence, so far to fall  
 behind?

*Magn.* Sir, the long absence of you, Sad Circumspection,  
 Caused me of adversity to fall in subjection.

*Red.* All that he saith, of truth doth proceed;  
 For where Sad Circumspection is long out of the way,  
 Of adversity it is to stand in drede.

*Sad Cir.* Without fail, sir, that is no nay;  
 Circumspection inhateth all running astray.

But, sir, by me to rule first ye began.

*Magn.* My wilfulness, sir, excuse I ne can.

*Sad Cir.* Then ye of folly in times past you repent?

*Magn.* Soothly, to repent me I have great cause.  
 Howbeit, from you I received a letter sent,  
 Which contained in it a special clause  
 That I should use largesse.

*Sad Cir.* Nay, sir, there a pause.

*Red.* Yet let us see this matter thoroughly engrosed.

*Magn.* Sir, this letter ye sent to me, at Pontoise was enclosed.

<sup>1</sup>powerless to act alone.

*Sad Cir.* Who brought you that letter, wote ye what he hight?

*Magn.* Largesse, sir, by his credence was his name.

*Sad Cir.* This letter ye speak of, never did I write.

*Red.* To give so hasty credence ye were much to blame.

*Magn.* Trith it is, sir; for after he wrought me much shame,

And caused me also to use too much Liberty,

And made also Measure to be put from me.

*Red.* Then Wealth with you might in no wise abide.

*Sad Cir.* Ah ha! Fancy and Folly met with you, I trow.

*Red.* It would be found so, if it were well tried.

*Magn.* Surely my wealth with them was overthrow.

*Sad Cir.* Remember you, therefore, how late ye were low.

*Red.* Yea, and beware of unhappy Abusion.

*Sad Cir.* And keep you from counterfeiting of Cloaked Collusion.

*Magn.* Sir, in Goodhope I am to amend.

*Red.* Use not then your countenance for to counterfeit.

*Sad Cir.* And from crafters and hafters I you forfend.

*Stage 5. Scene 35*

*Here PERSEVERANCE comes in*

*Magn.* Well, sir, after your counsel my mind I will set.

*Red.* What, brother Perseverance! surely well met.

*Sad Cir.* Ye come hither as well as can be thought.

*Per.* I heard say that Adversity with Magnificence had fought.

*Magn.* Yea, sir, with Adversity I have been vexéd.

But Goodhope and Redress hath mended mine estate,  
And Sad Circumspection to me they have annexéd.

*Red.* What this man hath said, perceive ye his sentence?<sup>1</sup>

*Magn.* Yea, sir, from him my courage shall never flit.

*Sad Cir.* According to truth they be well deviséd.

<sup>1</sup>Some considerable corruption here.

Full many things there be that lacketh redress,  
 The which were too long now to express;  
 But redress is redless,<sup>1</sup> and may do no correction.  
 Now welcome, forsooth, Sad Circumspection.

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And caused me also to use too much Liberty,

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*Red.* It would be found so, if it were well tried.

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*Magn.* Yea, sir, with Adversity I have been vexéd.

But Goodhope and Redress hath mended mine estate,  
And Sad Circumspection to me they have annexéd.

*Red.* What this man hath said, perceive ye his sentence?<sup>1</sup>

*Magn.* Yea, sir, from him my courage shall never flit.

*Sad Cir.* According to truth they be well devised.

<sup>1</sup>Some considerable corruption here.

*Magn.* Sirs, I am agreed to abide your ordinance,  
Faithful assurance with good peradventance.

*Per.* If you be so minded, we be right glad.

*Red.* And ye shall have more worship than ever ye had.

*Magn.* Well, I perceive in you there is much sadness,  
Gravity of counsel, providence, and wit;  
Your comfortable advice and wit exceedeth all gladness.

But friendly I will refrain you further ere we flit,  
Whereto were most meetly my corage to knit:  
Your minds I beseech you herein to express,  
Commencing this process at Maister Redress.

*Red.* Sith unto me foremost this process is erected,  
Herein I will aforce me to shew you my mind.  
First, from your magnificence, sin must be abjected,  
In all your works more grace shall ye find;  
Be gentle then of corage and learn to be kind,  
For of nobleness the chief point is to be liberal.  
So that your largesse be not too prodigal.

*Sad Cir.* Liberty to a lord belongeth of right,  
But wilful waywardness must walk out of the way;  
Measure of your lusts must have the oversight,  
And not all the niggard nor the chinchard to play;  
Let never niggardship your nobless affray;  
In your rewards use such moderation  
That nothing be given without consideration.

*Per.* To the increase of your honour then arm you with  
right,

And fumously<sup>1</sup> address you with magnanimity;  
And ever let the drede of God be in your sight;  
And know yourself mortal, for all your dignity;

Set not all your affiance in Fortune full of guile;  
Remember this life lasteth but a while.

<sup>1</sup>ardently.

<sup>2</sup>Line missing.

*Magn.* Redress, in my remembrance your lesson shall rest,  
And Sad Circumspection I mark in my mind:  
But, Perseverance, meseemeth your problem was best;  
I shall it never forget, nor leave it behind,  
But wholly to Perseverance myself I will bind,  
Of that I have misdones to make a redress,  
And with Sad Circumspection correct my wantonness.

*Red.* Unto this process briefly compiled,  
\*Comprehending the world casual and transitory,  
Who list to consider shall never be beguiled,  
If it be registered well in memory;  
A plain example of worldly vain-glory,  
How in this world there is no sickness,<sup>1</sup>  
But fallible flattery enmixed with bitterness.

*Sad Cir.* A mirror encircled is this interlude,  
This life inconstant for to behold and see;  
Suddenly advanced, and suddenly subdued,  
Suddenly riches, and suddenly poverty,  
Suddenly comfort, and suddenly adversity;  
Suddenly thus Fortune can both smile and frown,  
Suddenly set up, and suddenly cast down.

Suddenly promoted, and suddenly put back,  
Suddenly cherished, and suddenly cast aside,  
Suddenly commended, and suddenly find a lack,  
Suddenly granted, and suddenly denied,  
Suddenly hid, and suddenly espied;  
Suddenly thus Fortune can both smile and frown,  
Suddenly set up, and suddenly cast down.

*Per.* This treatise, devised to make your disport,  
Sheweth nowadays how the world cumbered is,  
To the pith of the matter who list to resort;  
To-day it is well, to-morrow it is all amiss,  
To-day in delight, to-morrow bare of bliss,

<sup>1</sup>security.

To-day a lord, to-morrow lie in the dust:  
Thus in the world there is no earthly trust.

To-day fair weather, to-morrow a stormy rage,  
To-day hot, to-morrow outrageous cold,  
To-day a yeoman, to-morrow made a page,  
To-day in surety, to-morrow bought and sold,  
To-day masterfist, to-morrow he hath no hold,  
To-day a man, to-morrow he lieth in the dust:  
Thus in this world there is no earthly trust.

*Magn.* This matter we have movéd, you mirthful to make,  
Pressly purposed under pretence of play,  
Sheweth wisdom to them that wisdom can take,  
How suddenly worldly wealth doth decay,  
How wisdom through wantonness vanishes away,  
How none estate living of himself can be sure,  
For the wealth of this world cannot endure;

Of the terrest richery<sup>1</sup> we fall in the flood,  
Beaten with storms of many a froward blast,  
Ensoibéd with the waves savage and wood,<sup>2</sup>  
Without our ship be sure, it is likely to brast,  
Yet of magnificence oft made is the mast;  
Thus none estate living of him can be sure,  
For the wealth of this world cannot endure.

*Red.* Now seemeth us fitting that ye then resort  
Home to your palace with joy and royalty.

*Sad Cir.* Where everything is ordained after your noble  
port.

*Per.* There to endure with all felicity.

*Magn.* I am content, my friends, that it so be.

*Red.* And ye that have heard this disport and game,  
Jesus preserve you from endless woe and shame!

*Amen.*

<sup>1</sup>terrestrial riches?

<sup>2</sup>wild.

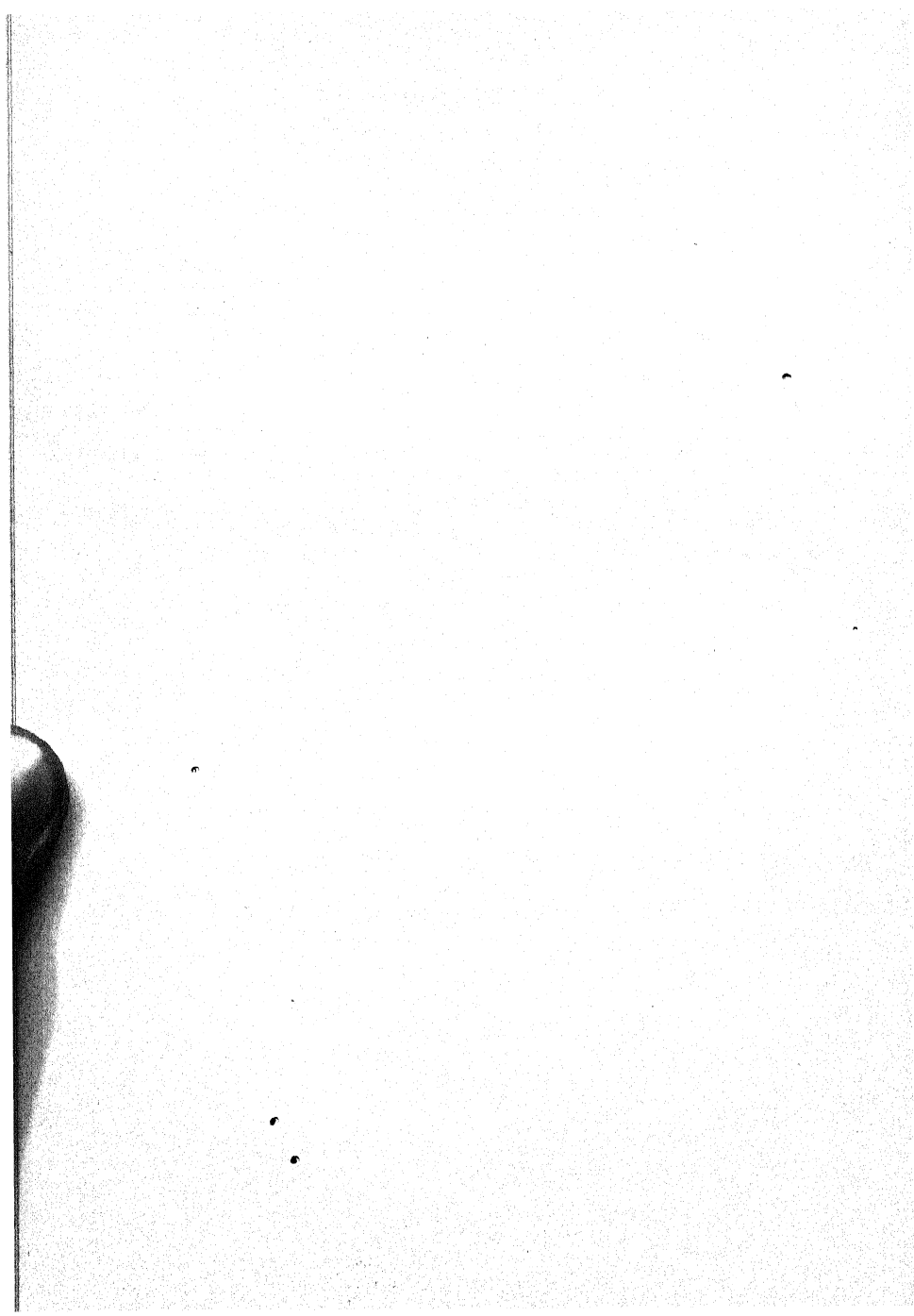


## CALLIOPE

Why wear ye Calliope embroidered with letters of gold?

*Skelton Laureate, Orato. Reg., Maketh this Answer*

Calliope,  
As ye may see,  
Regent is she  
Of poets all,  
Which she gave to me  
The high degree  
Laureate to be  
Of fame royall;  
Whose name enroll'd  
With silk and gold  
I dare be bold  
Thus for to wear.  
Of her I hold  
And her household;  
Though I wax old  
And somedelesere,  
Yet is she fain,  
Void of disdain,  
Me to retain  
Her serviture.  
With her certain  
I will remain,  
As my sovereign  
Most of pleasure,  
*Maulgre touz malheureux.*



## SPEAK, PARROT

*The Book compiled by Maister John Skelton, Poet Laureate,  
called "Speak, Parrot"*

My name is Parrot, a bird of Paradise,  
By nature devised of a wondrous kind,  
Daintily dieted with divers delicate spice  
Till Euphrates, that flood, driveth me into Ind,  
Where men of that countrie by fortune me find  
And send me to greatè ladyès of estate:  
Then Parrot must have an almond or a date.

A cage curiously carven, with a silver pin,  
Properly<sup>1</sup> painted, to be my coverture;  
A mirror of glass, that I may toot<sup>2</sup> therein:  
These, maidens full meekly with many a divers flower,  
Freshly they dress, and make sweet my bower,  
With "Speak, Parrot, I pray you." Full curtesly they say,  
"Parrot is a goodly bird, a pretty popinjay!"

With my beakè bent, my little wanton eye,  
My feathers fresh as is the emerald green,  
About my neck a circulet like the rich rubie,  
My little legs, my feet both feat<sup>3</sup> and clean,  
I am a minion to wait upon a queen:  
"My proper Parrot, my little pretty fool!"  
With ladies I learn, and go with them to school.

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Parrot, ye can laugh prettily!"  
Parrot hath not dinéd all this long day.  
Like your puss-cat, Parrot can mew and cry!  
In Latin, in Hebrew, Arabic and Chaldie,  
In Greeke tongue Parrot can both speak and say

<sup>1</sup>Handsomely.

<sup>2</sup>peep.

<sup>3</sup>neat.

(As Persius, that poet, doth report of me,  
*"Quis expedit psittaco suum chaire?"*<sup>1</sup>)

Doucè French of Paris Parrot can learn,  
 Pronouncing my purpose after my propertie,  
 With "*Parlez bien, Parrot, ou parlez rien!*"  
 With Dutch, with Spanish, my tongue can agree,  
 In English to God Parrot can supplie<sup>2</sup>:  
 "Christ save King Henry the Eighth, our royal king,  
 The red rose in honour to flourish and spring!

With Katherine incomparable, our royal queen also,  
 That peerless pomegranate, Christ save her noble grace!"  
 Parrot *saves hablar Castiliano*,<sup>3</sup>  
 With *fidarsi di se stesso*<sup>4</sup> in Turkey and in Thrace;  
*Vis consilii expers*, as teacheth me Horace,  
*Mole ruit sua*,<sup>5</sup> whose dictates are pregnant,  
*Soventez foy*s, Parrot, *en souenaunte*.

My lady mistress, Dame Philology,  
 Gave me a gift, in my nest when I lay,  
 To learn all language, and it to speak aptly  
 Now *pandez mory*, wax frantic, some men say,  
 Phroneses for Freneses may not hold her way.  
 An almond now for Parrot, delicately drest:  
 In *Salve festa dies*, *toto* there doth best.<sup>6</sup>

*Moderata juvant*,<sup>7</sup> but *toto* doth exceed:  
 Discretion is mother of noble virtues all.

<sup>1</sup>Who taught Parrot to say "Hallo!"? Dyce notes: "The Latin portions of the MS. are generally of ludicrous incorrectness, the transcriber evidently not having understood the language." I have done what I could with them.

<sup>2</sup>pray. <sup>3</sup>can speak Castilian. <sup>4</sup>trust in yourself.

<sup>5</sup>Strength without wisdom falls by its own weight.

<sup>6</sup>Perhaps this means, "When making holiday it is best to go the whole hog." But, in the ordinary way, it is as the next line infers.

<sup>7</sup>Moderation delights us.

*Myden agan*<sup>1</sup> in Greekè tongue we read.  
 But reason and wit wanteth their provinciall  
 When wilfulness is vicar generall.  
*Haec res acu tangitur*,<sup>2</sup> Parrot, *par moi foy*:  
*Ticez vous*, Parrot, *tenez vous coy*!

Busy, busy, busy, and business again!  
*Que pensez vous*, Parrot? what meaneth this business?  
*Vitulus*<sup>3</sup> in Horeb troubled Aaron's brain,  
 Melchizadek merciful made Moloch merciless:  
 Too wise is no virtue, too meddling, too restless.  
 In measure is treasure, *cum sensu maturato*,<sup>4</sup>  
*Ne tropo sanno, ne tropo mato*.<sup>5</sup>

Aram was fired with Chaldee's fire called Ur,  
 Jobab<sup>6</sup> was brought up in the land of Hus,  
 The lineage of Lot took support of Assur,  
 Jereboseth is Hebrew, who list the cause discuss –  
 "Peace, Parrot, ye prate as ye were *ebrius*":  
 Hist thee, *lieber Got von Himmelsreich, ich seg*!<sup>7</sup>  
 In Popering grew pears when Parrot was an egg."

What is this to purpose? "Over in a whinny Meg!"<sup>8</sup>  
 Hop Lobin of Lowdeon<sup>10</sup> would hae a bit a' bread;  
 The jibbet of Baldock was made for Jack Leg<sup>11</sup>;  
 An arrow unfeatheréd and without an head,  
 A bagpipe without blowing standeth in no stead:  
 Some run too far before, some run too far behind,  
 Some be too churlish, and some be too kind.

<sup>1</sup>i.e. *Μηδέν ἄγαν* – Nothing in excess.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. This hits the nail on the head properly.

<sup>3</sup>The calf. <sup>4</sup>with a mature perception.

<sup>5</sup>Not too sane, and not too mad. <sup>6</sup>Job.

<sup>7</sup>drunk. <sup>8</sup>i.e. *sage* – dear God of Heaven's kingdom, I say!

<sup>9</sup>The beginning of a ballad. <sup>10</sup>Lothian.

<sup>11</sup>Professor Berdan, of Yale University, suggests that this refers to John Lincoln, who was hanged in 1517 after the Evil May-day riot. (See *Modern Language Notes of America*, vol. xxx., 1915.)

*Ich dien* serveth for the ostrich feather,  
*Ich dien* is the language of the land of Beme<sup>1</sup>;  
 In Afric tongue *byrsa* is a thong of leather;  
 In Palestina there is Jerusaleme.  
*Colostrum*<sup>2</sup> now for Parrot, white bread and sweet cream!  
 Our Thomasen she doth trip, our jennet she doth shail<sup>3</sup>:  
 Parrot hath a black beard and a fair green tail.

"Morish mine own shelf!" the costermonger saith,  
 "Fate, fate, fate!"<sup>4</sup> ye Irish waterlag;  
 In flattering fables men find but little faith,  
 But *moveatur terra*, let the world wag;  
 Let Sir Wrig-wrag wrestle with Sir Dalyrag;  
 Every man after his manner of ways,  
*Paub yn ei arver*, so the Welchman says.

Such shreds of sentence, strewéd in the shop  
 Of ancient Aristippus and such other mo,  
 I gather together and close in my crop,  
 Of my wanton conceit, *unde depromo*  
*Dilemmata docta in paedagogio*  
*Sacro vatem*,<sup>5</sup> whereof to you I break –  
 I pray you, let Parrot have liberty to speak!

But "Ware the cat, Parrot, ware the false cat!"  
 With "Who is there – a maid? Nay, nay, I trow!"  
 "Ware riot, Parrot! Ware riot, ware that!"<sup>6</sup>  
 "Meat, meat for Parrot, meat I say, ho!"  
 Thus diverse of language by learning I grow,  
 With "Buss me,<sup>7</sup> sweet Parrot, buss me, sweet sweet!"  
 To dwell among ladyès Parrot is meet.

<sup>1</sup>Bohemia.      <sup>2</sup>milk biestings.      <sup>3</sup>stumble.

<sup>4</sup>Water, water, water!

<sup>5</sup>whence I produce dilemmas taught to the poet in a sacred school (?).

<sup>6</sup>Refers to Evil May-day riot (?).      <sup>7</sup>Kiss me.

"Parrot, Parrot, Parrot, pretty popinjay!"

With my beak I can pick my little pretty toe;  
My delight is solace, pleasure, disport, and play:

Like a wanton, when I will, I reel to and fro.

Parrot can say *Cæsar, ave!* also.

But Parrot hath no favour to Esebone<sup>1</sup>:

Above all other birds, set Parrot alone.

• *Ulula*, Esebon, for Jeromy doth weep!

Zion is in sadness, Rachel ruly<sup>2</sup> doth look;

Madionita Jethro, our Moses keepeth his sheep;

Gideon is gone, that Zalmane undertook,

Horeb *et* Zeb, of *fudicum*<sup>3</sup> read the book:

Now Gebell, Amon, and Amaloch – "Hark, hark!

Parrot pretendeth to be a Bible clerk!"

O Esebon, Esebon! to thee is come again

Sihon, the regent *Amorraeorum*,<sup>4</sup>

And Og, that fat hog of Bashan, doth retain

The crafty *coistronus Cananaeorum*<sup>5</sup>;

And *asylum*,<sup>6</sup> whilom *refugium miserorum*,<sup>7</sup>

*Non fanum, sed profanum*,<sup>8</sup> standeth in little stead:

*Ulula*, Esebon, for Jephthah is stark dead!

Esebon, Maribon, Weston next Barnet;

A trim tram<sup>9</sup> for an horse-mill it were a nice thing;

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Heshbon, capital of Sihon, King of the Amorites – London (?).

<sup>2</sup>ruefully.

<sup>3</sup>Book of Judges.

<sup>4</sup>of the Amorites – Henry VIII (?). Josephus (4 *Ant.* v. 3) represents Og as Sihon's friend and ally.

<sup>5</sup>Canaanitish scullion. This must refer to Wolsey and Veysey, who were chiefly instrumental, with the King, in abolishing the right of sanctuary for those clergy guilty of capital crimes. This was regarded by the Church party (i.e. Skelton's party) as a betrayal of the Church. (Cf. Berdan, *op. cit.*)

<sup>6</sup>sanctuary.

<sup>7</sup>once the refuge of the unhappy.

<sup>8</sup>Not sacred, but profane.

<sup>9</sup>A trinket.

Daintie for damoiselles, chaffer far fet<sup>1</sup>:

Bo-ho doth bark well, but Hough-ho he ruleth the ring;  
 From Scarpary to Tartary renown therein doth spring,  
 With "He said, and we said," ich wot now what ich wot<sup>2</sup> —  
*Quod magnus est dominus Judas Scariot.*<sup>3</sup>

Ptolemy and Haly were cunning and wise

In the volvell,<sup>4</sup> in the quadrant, and in the astroloby,  
 To prognosticate truly the chance of Fortune's dice;  
 Some treat of their tirykis, some of astrology,  
 Some *pseudo-propheta* with chiromancy:  
 If Fortune be friendly, and grace be the guide,  
 Honour with renown will run on that side.

*Monon calon agaton,*<sup>5</sup>  
*Quod Parrato*  
*In Graeco.*

Let Parrot, I pray you, have liberty to prate,  
 For *aurea lingua Graeca*<sup>6</sup> ought to be magnified,  
 If it were conn'd perfitely, and after the rate,  
 As *lingua Latina*,<sup>7</sup> in school matter occupied.  
 But our Greekès their Greek so well have applied  
 That they cannot say in Greek, riding by the way,  
 "Ho, hostler, fetch my horse a bottle of hay!"

Neither frame a syllogism in *phrisesomorum*,<sup>8</sup>

*Formaliter et Graece, cum medio termino*<sup>9</sup>:

Our Greekès wallow in the wash-bowl *Argolicorum*<sup>10</sup>;

For though they can tell in Greek what is *phormio*,<sup>11</sup>

Yet they seek out their Greek in *Capricornio*;

<sup>1</sup>far-fetched merchandise.

<sup>2</sup>I know now what I know.

<sup>3</sup>But mighty is lord Judas Iscariot (probably Wolsey).

<sup>4</sup>a kind of astronomical clock.

<sup>5</sup>i.e. *Μόνον καλὸν ἀγαθόν* — the only beauty and goodness.

<sup>6</sup>the golden Greek tongue.

<sup>7</sup>the Latin tongue.

<sup>8</sup>in Fresison (?).

<sup>9</sup>Formally and in Greek, with the middle term.

<sup>10</sup>of the Greeks.

<sup>11</sup>a straw-mat.



For ye scrape out good scripture, and set in a gall,  
Ye go about to amend, and ye mar all.<sup>1</sup>

Some argue *secundum quid ad simpliciter*,  
And yet he would be reckon'd *pro Areopagita*<sup>2</sup>;  
And some make distinctions *multiplicita*,  
Whether *ita* were *non*, or *non* before *ita*,<sup>3</sup>  
Neither wise nor well-learned, but like *hermaphrodita*<sup>4</sup>;  
Set *sophia*<sup>5</sup> aside, for every Jack Raker  
And every mad meddler must now be a maker.<sup>6</sup>

In *Academia* Parrot dare no problem keep,  
For *Graece fari*<sup>7</sup> so occupieth the chair  
That *Latinum fari* may fall to rest and sleep,  
And *syllogisari*<sup>8</sup> was drowned at Sturbridge Fair;  
Trivials and quatrivials<sup>9</sup> so sore now they impair<sup>10</sup>  
That Parrot the popinjay hath pity to behold  
How the rest of good learning is rolled up and troid.

*Albertus de modo significandi*,<sup>11</sup>  
And *Donatus*<sup>12</sup> be driven out of school;  
Prisian's head broken now handy dandy,  
And *Inter didascolos*<sup>13</sup> is reckoned for a fool;  
Alexander,<sup>14</sup> a gander of Mæander's pool,  
With *De Conciles*<sup>15</sup> is cast out of the gate,  
And *De Rationales*<sup>16</sup> dare not shew his pate.

Plautus in his comedies a child shall now rehearse,  
And meddle with Quintilian in his *Declamations*,

<sup>1</sup>A reference to Erasmus' New Testament (?).

<sup>2</sup>as one of the senators or judges. <sup>3</sup>i.e. quibbling distinctions.

<sup>4</sup>I suppose — neither one thing nor the other. <sup>5</sup>wisdom.

<sup>6</sup>composer. <sup>7</sup>to speak Greek. <sup>8</sup>ability to reason, to syllogise.

<sup>9</sup>The two school-courses, elementary and advanced. (See p. 353, note.)

<sup>10</sup>are impaired.

<sup>11</sup>Albertus' *Margarita Poetica*, a classical anthology (¶472).

<sup>12</sup>A Latin grammar by Ælius Donatus. <sup>13</sup>Another grammar (?).

<sup>14</sup>A mediaeval grammarian. <sup>15</sup>The Canon law (?). <sup>16</sup>i.e. Logic.

That Petty Caton<sup>1</sup> can scantily construe a verse,  
 With *Aveto in Graeco*,<sup>2</sup> and such solemn salutations,  
 Can scantily the tenses of his conjugations:  
 Setting their minds so much on eloquence  
 That of their school matters lost is the whole sentence.<sup>3</sup>

Now a nutmeg, a nutmeg, *cum garyophyllo*,  
 For Parrot to pick upon, his brain for to stable,  
 Sweet cinnamon-stickës and *pleris cum musco*!  
 In Paradise, that place of pleasure perdurable,<sup>4</sup>  
 The progeny of Parrots were fair and favourable;  
 Now in *vallè* Hebron Parrot is fain to feed:  
 Christ-Cross and Saint Nicholas, Parrot, be your good  
 speed!

The mirror that I toot in, *quasi diaphanum*,<sup>5</sup>  
*Vel quasi speculum, in aenigmate*,<sup>6</sup>  
*Elencticum*, or else *enthymematicum*,<sup>7</sup>  
 For logicians to look on, somewhat *sophistice*!<sup>8</sup>  
 Rhetoricians and orators in fresh humanitie,<sup>9</sup>  
 Support Parrot, I pray you, with your suffrage ornate,  
 Of *confuse tantum*<sup>10</sup> avoiding the check-mate.

But of this supposition that calléd is art,  
*Confuse distributive*,<sup>11</sup> as Parrot hath devised,  
 Let every man after his merit take his part,  
 For in this process<sup>12</sup> Parrot nothing hath surmised,  
 No matter pretended, nor nothing enterprised,  
 But that *metaphora, allegoria* with all,  
 Shall be his protection, his paves,<sup>13</sup> and his wall.

<sup>1</sup>*Cato Parvus* (a sort of supplement to *Cato Magnus*, i.e. *Dionysii Catonis Disticha de Moribus*) was written by Daniel Church, or Ecclesiensis, a domestic in the court of Henry II.

<sup>2</sup>Good-morning in Greek.      <sup>3</sup>meaning.      <sup>4</sup>everlasting.

<sup>5</sup>as though transparent.      <sup>6</sup>Or like a looking-glass in a riddle.

<sup>7</sup>An elenchus [in logic] . . . an enthymeme.

<sup>8</sup>wisely.      <sup>9</sup>elegant literature.      <sup>10</sup>so much confusion.

<sup>11</sup>i.e. methodical confusion.      <sup>12</sup>discourse.      <sup>13</sup>shield.

For Parrot is no churlish chough, nor no fleckéd pie,  
 Parrot is no pendugum,<sup>1</sup> that men call a carling,  
 Parrot is no woodcock, nor no butterfly,  
 Parrot is no stammering stare, that men call a starling:  
 But Parrot is my own dear heart and my dear darling.  
 Melpomene, that fair maid, she burnished his beak:  
 I pray you, let Parrot have liberty to speak.

Parrot is a fair bird for a lady:

God of his goodness him framéd and wrought;  
 When Parrot is dead, he doth not putrify.

Yet, all things mortal shall turn unto nought,  
 Except man's soul, that Christ so deare bought:  
 That never may die, nor never die shall –  
 Make much of Parrot, the popinjay royal.

For that peerless Prince that Parrot did create,  
 He made you of nothing by his majestie.  
 Point well this problem that Parrot doth prate,  
 And remember among how Parrot and ye  
 Shall leap from this life, as merry as we be:  
 Pomp, pride, honour, riches, and worldly lust,  
 Parrot saith plainly, shall turn all to dust.

Thus Parrot doth pray you,  
 With heart most tender,  
 To reckon with this recule<sup>2</sup> now,  
 And it to remember.

*Psittacus, ecce, cano; nec sunt mea carmina Phæbo  
 Digna scio; tamen est plena camena deo.*<sup>3</sup>

*Secundum Skeltonida famigeratum,  
 In Piereorum catalogo numeratum.*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>penguin.

<sup>2</sup>writing.

<sup>3</sup>Parrot, lo, I sing; I know my songs are not worthy of Phoebus;  
 yet the inspiration is full of the god.

<sup>4</sup>Next to the famed Skelton,  
 Counted in the book of the Muses.

*Itaque consolamini invicem in verbis istis, etc.*<sup>1</sup>

*Candidi lectores, callide, callete: vestrum fovete Psittacum, etc.*

## GALATHEA

Speak, Parrot, I pray you, for Mary's sake,  
What moan he made when Pamphilus lost his make.<sup>2</sup>

## PARROT

My proper Bess,  
My pretty Bess,  
    Turn once again to me!  
For sleepest thou, Bess,  
Or wakest thou, Bess,  
    Mine heart it is with thee.

My daisy delectable,  
My primrose commendable,  
My violet amiable,  
My joy inexplicable,  
    Now turn again to me.

I will be firm and stable,  
And to your serviceable,  
And also profitable,  
If ye be agreeable  
    To turn again to me,  
    My proper Bess.

Alas, I am disdained,  
And as a man half maimed,  
My heart is so sore pained!  
I pray thee, Bess, unfeigned,  
    Yet come again to me!

<sup>1</sup>"Wherefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. iv. 18).

<sup>2</sup>Fair readers, be shrewdly wise: cherish your Parrot.      <sup>3</sup>mate.

By love I am constrained  
 To be with you retained,  
 It will not be refrained:  
 I pray you, be reclaimed,  
 And turn again to me,  
 My proper Bess.

Quoth Parrot, the popinjay royal

*Martialis cecinit carmen, fit mihi scutum: —  
 Est mihi lasciva pagina, vita proba.*<sup>1</sup>

## GALATHEA

Now kus<sup>2</sup> me, Parrot, kus me, kus, kus, kus!  
 God's blessing light on thy sweet little mus<sup>3</sup>!

*Vita et anima,  
 Zoe kai psyche.*<sup>4</sup>

*Concumbent Graece. Non est hic sermo pudicus.*<sup>5</sup>

*Attica dictamina  
 Sunt plumbi lamina,<sup>6</sup>  
 Vel spuria vitulina:  
 Avertat haec Urania!  
 Amen, Amen,  
 And set too a D,  
 And then it is Amend  
 Our new found A.B.C*

*Cum caeteris paribus.*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Martial sang a song, 'made a shield for me:  
 I have a sportive page, an honest life.

<sup>2</sup>kiss.      <sup>3</sup>beak.

<sup>4</sup>Life and soul,  
 Life and soul (Ζωή και ψυχή).

<sup>5</sup>They lie together in Greek. This is not obscene talk.

<sup>6</sup>Attic sayings [?] are a sheet of lead [or, a shield].

<sup>7</sup>Other things being equal.

## LENVOY PRIMERE

Go, little quaire,<sup>1</sup> naméd the Popinjay,  
 Home to resort Jeroboseth persuade;  
 For the cliffs of Scalop they roar wellaway,  
 And the sands of Cefas begin to waste and fade,  
 For replication restless that he of late there made:  
 Now, Neptune and Æolus are agreed of likelihode,  
 For Titus at Dover abideth in the rode;

Lucina she wadeth among the watery floodés,  
 And the cocks begin to crow against the day;  
*Le toison de Jason*<sup>2</sup> is lodgéd among the shrowds,  
 Of Argus revengéd, recover when he may;  
 Lycaon<sup>3</sup> of Libyk and Lydy hath caught his pray<sup>4</sup>:  
 Go, little quaire, pray them that you behold  
 In their remembrance ye may be enrolled.

Yet some fools say that ye are furnishtëd with knacks,<sup>5</sup>  
 That hang together as feathers in the wind;  
 But lewdly are they lettered that your learning lacks,  
 Barking and whining, like churlish curs of kind<sup>6</sup>:  
 For who looketh wisely in your works may find  
 Much fruitful matter. But now, for your defence  
 Against all remords,<sup>7</sup> arm you with patience.

<sup>1</sup>book.

<sup>2</sup>Jason's golden fleece. A reference, perhaps, to the 400,000 crowns with which the French Commissioners came to purchase Tournai, captured in 1513. (See Berdan.)

<sup>3</sup>Who, for his impiety to Jupiter, was changed into a wolf. This probably refers to Wolsey. See later "His wolf's head, wan, blue as lead, gapeth over the crown."

<sup>4</sup>The bishopric of Tournai (?)

<sup>5</sup>toys.

<sup>6</sup>i.e. by nature.

<sup>7</sup>blamings.

## MONOSTICHON

*Ipsē sagax aequi ceu verax nuntius ito.<sup>1</sup>*  
*Morda puros mal desires.<sup>2</sup> Portugues.*  
*Penultimo die Octobris, 33°<sup>3</sup>*

## SECUNDE LENVOY

Pass forth, Parrot, towards some passenger,  
 Require him to convey you over the salt foam;  
 Addressing yourself, like a sad messenger,  
 To our sullen seignor Sadok,<sup>4</sup> desire him to come home,  
 Making his pilgrimage by *nostre dame de Crome*:  
 For Jerico and Jerssey shall meet together as soon  
 As he to exploit the man out of the moon.<sup>5</sup>

With porpoise and grampus he may feed him fat,  
 Though he pamper not his paunch with the great seal:

<sup>1</sup>Himself wise in justice let him go like a true messenger.

<sup>2</sup>Dyce translates: "To bite the pure is an evil desire."

<sup>3</sup>Professor Berdan conjectures that these figures stand for 1517 - i.e. dating from the accession of Henry VII, a habit that Skelton might have contracted as an old court-servant, again employed here to protect himself. As Dyce remarks, it is obvious that they could not refer to the year 1533, as by that time both Skelton and Wolsey were dead. Moreover, a few pages before, in the Harleian MS. 2252, from which these portions of *Speak, Parrot* are printed, there occurs the name "John Colyn, mercer, of London, 1517."

<sup>4</sup>Wolsey (?). Berdan conjectures - Charles Somerset, Earl of Worcester, who headed the embassy to the French court in November, 1518. (See date below.) If this is so, then do Jerico and Jersey, in the next line but one, refer to Paris and London? Zadok was one of the chief priests of Israel, but Sadoke (tenth book of *Morte D'Arthur*) was friend to young Alisander, as Somerset to Henry.

<sup>5</sup>i.e. as soon as he can drive the man out of the moon.

We have longéd and lookéd long time for that,  
 Which causeth poor suitors have many a hungry meal:  
 As president and regent he ruleth every deal.<sup>1</sup>  
 Now pass forth, good Parrot, our Lord be your steed,  
 In this your journey to prosper and speed!

And though some disdain you, and say how ye prate,  
 'And how your poems are barren of polished eloquence,  
 There is none that your name will abrogate  
 Than nodipolls<sup>2</sup> and gramatolls of small intelligence;  
 Too rude is their reason to reach to your sentence<sup>3</sup>:  
 Such melancholy mastiffs and mangy cur dogs  
 Are meet for a swineherd to hunt after hogs.

## MONOSTICHON

*Psittace perge volans, fatuorum tela retundas.<sup>4</sup>*  
*Morda puros mall desires. Portugues.*  
*In diebus Novembris,*  
 34.<sup>5</sup>

LE DEREYN LENVOY<sup>6</sup>

Prepare you, Parrot, bravely your passage to take,  
 Of Mercury under the trinall aspect,  
 And sadly salute our sullen sire Sydrake,<sup>7</sup>  
 And shew him that all the world doth conject  
 How the matters he mellis in come to small effect;  
 For he wanteth of his wits that all would rule alone:  
 It is no little burden to bear a great mill-stone.

<sup>1</sup>This surely refers to Wolsey. And yet Wolsey had the Great Seal in 1515!

<sup>2</sup>blockheads.

<sup>3</sup>meaning.

<sup>4</sup>Parrot, go flying, turn back the shafts of fatuity. <sup>5</sup>1518 (?).

<sup>6</sup>From here on, at any rate, the personal satire is certainly directed against Wolsey.

<sup>7</sup>i.e. Wolsey. (Cf. *The Historie of King Boccus and Sydracke*, 1510.)



To bring all the sea into a cherrystone pit,  
 To number all the stars in the firmament,  
 To rule ix. realms by one man's wit,  
 To such things impossible reason cannot consent:  
 Much money, men say, there madly he hath spent –  
 Parrot, ye may prate this under protestation,  
 Was never such a senator since Christ's incarnation!

Wherefore he may now come again as he went,  
 • *Non sine postica sanna*,<sup>1</sup> as I trow,  
 From Calais to Dover, to Canterbury in Kent,  
 To make reckoning in the resseyte how Robin lost his bow,  
 To sow corn in the sea-sand, there will no croppè grow.  
 Though ye be taunted, Parrot, with tongues attainted,  
 Yet your problems are pregnant, and with loyalty acquainted.

## MONOSTICHON

*I, Properans Parrote, malas sic corripe linguas.  
 Morda puros mall desires. Portugues.  
 15 Kalendis Decembris,  
 34.*

## DISTICHON MISERABILE

*Altior, heu, cedro, crudelior, heu, leopardo!  
 Heu, vitulus bubali fit dominus Priami!*<sup>2</sup>

## TETRASTICHON

*Unde species Priami est digna imperio.<sup>3</sup>  
 Non annis licet et Priamus sed honore voceris:  
 Dum foveas vitulum, rex, regeris, Britonum;*

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Not without a grimace behind his back.

<sup>2</sup>Higher, alas, than the cedar, more cruel, alas, than the leopard!  
 Alas, the calf of the ox becomes the lord of Priam!

<sup>3</sup>Whence the race of Priam is worthy of dominion.

*Rex, regeris, non ipse regis: res inclyte, calle;  
Subde tibi vitulum, ne fatuet nimium.*<sup>1</sup>

God amend all,  
That all amend may!  
Amen, quoth Parrot,  
The royal popinjay.

*Kalendris Decembris,*  
34.

## LENVOY ROYAL

Go, proper Parrot, my popinjay,  
That lords and ladies this pamphlet may behold,  
With notable clerks: supplie<sup>2</sup> to them, I pray,  
Your rudeness to pardon, and also that they wold  
Vouchsafe to defend you against the brawling scold  
Calléd Detraction, encankeréd with envy,  
Whose tongue is attainted with slanderous obloquy.

For truth in parable ye wantonly pronounce,  
Languages divers, yet under that doth rest  
Matter more precious than the rich jacounce,<sup>3</sup>  
Diamond, or ruby, or balas<sup>4</sup> of the best,  
Or Indy sapphire with orient pearlès drest:  
Therefore your remorders are mad, or else stark blind,  
You to remord erst ere they know your mind.

## DISTICHON

*I, volitans, Parrote, tuam moderare Minervam:  
Vix tua percipient, qui tua teque legent.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>... While you cherish the calf, king of Britain, you are ruled: king, you are ruled, you do not yourself rule: illustrious king, be wise, Subdue thou the calf, lest he become too foolish.

<sup>2</sup>supplicate.

<sup>3</sup>jacinth.

<sup>4</sup>Another kind of ruby.

<sup>5</sup>Go, flying Parrot, moderate your wit:

Scarce will they understand you who read you and your writings.

## HYPERBATON

*Psittacus hi notus seu Persius est puto notus,  
Nec reor est nec erit licet est erit.*<sup>1</sup>

*Maledite soyte bouche malheureuse!*

34.

## LAUCTURE DE PARROT

O my Parrot, O unice dilecte, votorum meorum omnis lapis,  
lapis pretiosus operimentum tuum!<sup>2</sup>

## PARROT

*Sicut Aaron populumque, sic bubali vitulus, sic bubali vitulus,  
sic bubali vitulus.*<sup>3</sup>

Thus much Parrot hath openly expressed:  
Let see who dare make up the rest.

*Le Popinjay sen va complayndre:*

Helas! I lament the dull abuséd brain,  
The infatuate fantasies, the witless wilfulness  
Of one and other at me that have disdain:  
Some say they cannot my parables express,  
Some say I rail at riot reckless,  
Some say but little, and think more in their thought,  
How this process I prate of it is all for nought.

O causeless cowardice, O heartless hardness!  
O manless manhood, enfaunted all with fear!

<sup>1</sup>Quite unintelligible.

<sup>2</sup>O only loved-one, the whole jewel of my prayers, a precious stone is thy covering. (Cf. Ezek. xxviii. 13.)

<sup>3</sup>As Aaron and the people, so the calf of the ox, etc.\*

O conning clergy, where is your readiness  
 To practise or postil this process<sup>1</sup> here and there?  
 For dread ye dare no meddle with such gere,  
 Or else ye pinch courtesy, truly as I trow,  
 Which of you first dare boldly pluck the crow.

The sky is cloudy, the coast is nothing clear;  
 Titan hath trust up his tresses of fine gold;  
 Jupiter for Saturn dare make no royal cheer;  
 Lycaon laugheth thereat, and beareth him more bold;  
 Rachel, ruely ragged, she is like to catch cold;  
 Moloch, that mawmet,<sup>2</sup> there dare no man withstay –  
 The rest of such reckoning may make a foul fray.

*Dixit, quod Parrot, the royal popinjay.*

*C'est chose malheureuse,  
 Que mal bouche.*

PARROT

*Jupiter ut nitido deus est veneratus Olympo,  
 Hic coliturque deus.  
 Sunt data thura Jovi, rutilo solio residenti;  
 Cum Jove thura capit.  
 Jupiter astrorum rector dominusque polorum,  
 Anglica sceptrā regit.<sup>3</sup>*

GALATHEA

I compass the conveyance unto the capitall  
 Of our clerk Cleros, whither, thither, and why not  
 hither?

<sup>1</sup>annotate this matter.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. Mahomet, or puppet.

<sup>3</sup>As Jove is venerated in shining Olympus, he is worshipped here as a god. Incense is given to Jove, sitting on his ruddy throne; with Jove he takes the incense. Jove, ruler of the stars and lord of the poles, rules the English kingdom.

For pass a pace apace<sup>1</sup> is gone to catch a moll,  
 Over Scarpary *mala vi*, Monsire cry and slither:  
 What sequel shall follow when penguins meet together?  
 Speak, Parrot, my sweet bird, and ye shall have a date,  
 Of frantickness and foolishness which is the great state?

## PARROT

Difficult it is to answer this demand:

Yet, after the sagacity of a popinjay, —  
 Frantickness doth rule and all thing command;  
 Wilfulness and brainless now rule all the ray<sup>2</sup>;  
 Against frantic frenzy there dare no man say nay,  
 For frantickness and wilfulness, and brainless ensemble,  
 The neb of a lion they make to trete<sup>3</sup> and tremble;

To jumble, to stumble, to tumble down like fools,  
 To lour, to droop, to kneel, to stoop, and to play couch  
 quail,  
 To fish afore the net and to draw pools;  
 He maketh them to bear baubles, and to bear a low sail;  
 He carrieth a king in his sleeve, if all the world fail;  
 He faceth out at a flush<sup>4</sup> with "Shew, take all!"  
 Of Pope Julius' cards he is chief cardinal.

He triumpheth, he trumpeth, he turneth all up and down,  
 With "Skirgalliard,<sup>5</sup> proud palliard,<sup>6</sup> vauntperler,<sup>7</sup> ye  
 prate!"  
 His wolf's head, wan, blue as lead, gapeth over the crown:  
 It is to fear lest he would wear the garland on his pate,  
 Paregal with all princes far passing his estate:  
 For of our regent the regiment he hath, *ex qua vi*,  
*Patet per versus, quod ex vi botte harvi.*<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>An allusion to Secretary Pace (?). <sup>2</sup>array. <sup>3</sup>become tractable.

<sup>4</sup>He vaunts it with a hand of cards all of one suit.

<sup>5</sup>lecher.

<sup>6</sup>whoremonger.

<sup>7</sup>One that is too forward to speak.

<sup>8</sup>Unintelligible.

Now, Galathea, let Parrot, I pray you, have his date;  
 Ye dates now are dainty, and wax very scant,  
 For grocers were grugéd at and groined at<sup>1</sup> but late;  
 Great raisins with reasons be now reprobitant,  
 For raisins are no reasons, but reasons currant:  
 Run God, run Devil! yet the date of our Lord  
 And the date of the Devil doth shrewdlie accord.

*Dixit*, quod Parrot, the popinjay royal.

## GALATHEA

Now, Parrot, my sweet bird, speak out yet once again,  
 Set aside all sophisms, and speak now true and plain.

## PARROT

So many moral matters, and so little used;  
 So much new making,<sup>2</sup> and so mad time spent;  
 So much translation into English confused;  
 So much noble preaching, and so little amendment;  
 — So much consultation, almost to none intent;  
 So much provision, and so little wit at need —  
 Since Deucalion's flood there can no clerkès read.

So little discretion, and so much reasoning;  
 So much hardy dardy, and so little manliness;  
 So prodigal expence, and so shameful reckoning;  
 So gorgeous garments, and so much wretchedness;  
 So much portly pride, with purses penniless;  
 So much spent before, and so much unpaid behind —  
 Since Deucalion's flood there can no clerkès find.

So much forecasting, and so far an after deal;  
 So much politic prating, and so little standeth in stead;

<sup>1</sup>grumbled at.

<sup>2</sup>new composing.

So little secretness, and so much great counsel;  
 So many bold barons, their hearts as dull as lead;  
 So many noble bodies under a daw's head;  
 So royal a king as reigneth upon us all –  
 Since Deucalion's flood was never seen nor shall.

So many complaints, and so small redress;  
 So much calling on, and so small taking heed;  
 So much loss of merchandise, and so remediless;  
 • So little care for the common weal, and so much need;  
 So much doubtful danger, and so little drede;  
 So much pride of prelates, so cruell and so keen –  
 Since Deucalion's flood, I trow, was never seen.

So many thieves hangéd, and thieves never the less;  
 So much 'prisonment for matters not worth an haw;  
 So much papers wering for right a small excess<sup>1</sup>;  
 So much pillory-pageants under colour of good law;  
 So much turning on the cuck-stool<sup>2</sup> for every guy gaw;  
 So much mockish making of statutes of array –  
 Since Deucalion's flood was never, I dare say.

So brainless calvès heads, so many sheep's tails;  
 So bold a bragging butcher,<sup>3</sup> and flesh sold so dear;  
 So many plucked partridges, and so fat quails;  
 So mangy a mastiff cur, the great greyhound's<sup>4</sup> peer;  
 So big a bulk of brow-antlers cabbidgéd<sup>5</sup> that year;  
 So many swans dead, and so small revell –  
 Since Deucalion's flood, I trow, no man can tell.

So many truces taken, and so little perfite truth;  
 So much belly-joy, and so wasteful banqueting;

<sup>1</sup>offence.

<sup>2</sup>stool fixed at the end of a long pole, used for punishment of scolds and brawlers by plunging them into water.

<sup>3</sup>Wolsey was reported to be the son of a butcher.

<sup>4</sup>Henry VIII, in allusion to the royal arms.

<sup>5</sup>cuckold's horns growing on the head.

So pinching and sparing, and so little profit growth;  
 So many hugy houses building, and so small householding;  
 Such statutes upon diets, such pilling and polling;  
 So is all thing wrought wilfully without reason and skill –  
 Since Deucalion's flood the world was never so ill.

So many vagabonds, so many beggars bold;  
 So much decay of monasteries and of religious places;  
 So hot hatred against the Church, and charity so cold;  
 So much of "my Lord's Grace," and in him no graces;  
 So many hollow hearts, and so double faces;  
 So much sanctuary-breaking, and privileges barréd –  
 Since Deucalion's flood was never seen nor learned.

So much ragged right of a rammés horn<sup>2</sup>;  
 So rigorous ruling in a prelate specially;  
 So bold and so bragging, and was so basely born;  
 So lordly in his looks and so disdainfully;  
 So fat a maggot, bred of a fleshè fly;  
 Was never such filthy Gorgon, nor such an epicure,  
 Since Deucalion's flood, I make thee fast and sure.

So much privy watching in cold winters' nights;  
 So much searching of loselles, and is himself so lewd;  
 So much conjurations for elfish mid-day sprites;  
 So many bullés of pardon published and shewed;  
 So much crossing and blessing, and him all beshrewd;  
 Such pole-axes and pillars,<sup>3</sup> such mules trapt with gold –  
 Since Deucalion's flood in no chronicle is told.

*Dixit, quod Parrot.*

<sup>1</sup>At this time "His Grace" was the royal style, so that it was a great piece of arrogance for Wolsey to adopt it.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. justice as crooked as a ram's horn.

<sup>3</sup>A reference to the two silver pillars and four gilt pole-axes that Wolsey had carried before him in his train as he rode on his mule through the streets. (See Cavendish, *Life of Wolsey*.)



*Crescet in immensum me vivo Psittacus iste;  
Hinc mea dicetur Skeltonidis inclita fama.*<sup>1</sup>

Quod Skelton Laureat,  
Orator Regius.

34.

- <sup>1</sup>This Parrot will grow immensely in my lifetime;  
<sup>2</sup>Hence the glorious fame of me, Skelton, will be celebrated.

COLIN CLOUT<sup>1</sup>

*Hereafter followeth a little Book called Colin Clout, compiled by  
MASTER SKELTON, Poet Laureate*

*Quis consurget mecum adversus malignantes? Aut quis  
stabit mecum adversus operantes iniquitatem? Nemo, Domine!<sup>2</sup>*

What can it avail  
To drive forth a snail,  
Or to make a sail  
Of an herring's tail?  
To rhyme or to rail,  
To write or to indite,  
Either for delight  
Or else for despight?  
Or books to compile  
Of divers manner style,  
Vice to revile  
And sin to exile?  
To teach or to preach,  
As reason will reach?  
Say this, and say that,  
His head is so fat,  
He wotteth never what  
Nor whereof he speaketh;  
He crieth and he creaketh,  
He prieth and he peeketh,  
He chides and he chatters,  
He prates and he patters,

<sup>1</sup> A familiar name for the labourer of that day, either rural or town-bred.

<sup>2</sup> "Who will rise up with me against evil-doers? or who will stand up with me against the workers of iniquity? No one, O Lord!" (Ps. xciii. 16, Vulgate).

He clitters and he clatters,  
He meddles and he smatters,  
He gloses and he flatters;  
Or if he speak plain,  
Then he lacketh brain,  
He is but a fool;  
Let him go to school,  
On a three-footed stool  
That he may down sit,  
For he lacketh wit!  
And if that he hit  
The nail on the head,  
It standeth in no stead.  
The Devil, they say, is dead  
The Devil is dead!

It may well so be,  
Or else they would see  
Otherwise, and flee  
From worldly vanitie,  
And foul covetousness,  
And other wretchedness,  
Fickle falseness,  
Variableness,  
With unstableness.

And if ye stand in doubt  
Who brought this rhyme about,  
My name is Colin Clout.  
I purpose to shake out  
All my conning bag,<sup>1</sup>  
Like a clerkly hag.<sup>2</sup>  
For though my rhyme be ragged,  
Tattered and jagged,  
Rudely rain-beaten,  
Rusty and moth-eaten,

<sup>1</sup>store of knowledge.

<sup>2</sup>old scholar (here).

## MAJOR SATIRES

If ye take well therewith,  
 It hath in it some pith.  
 For, as far as I can see,  
 It is wrong with each degree:  
 For the temporalitie  
 Accuseth the spiritualitie;  
 The spiritual again  
 Doth grudge and complain  
 Upon the temporal men:  
 Thus each of other blother  
 The one against the other:  
 Alas, they make me shudder !  
 For in hugger-mugger  
 The Church is put in fault;  
 The prelates be so haut,  
 They say, and look so high,  
 As though they would fly  
 Above the starry sky.

Lay men say indeed  
 How they take no heed  
 Their silly sheep to feed,  
 But pluck away and pull  
 The fleeces of their wool, –  
 Unneth<sup>1</sup> they leave a lock  
 Of wool among their flock!  
 And as for their conning,<sup>2</sup>  
 A glomming and a mumming,<sup>3</sup>  
 And make thereof a jape<sup>4</sup>!  
 They gasp and they gape  
 All to have promotion, –  
 There is their whole devotion:  
 With money, if it will hap,  
 To catch the forkéd cap<sup>5</sup>:  
 Forsooth they are too lewd  
 To say so, all beshrewed!

<sup>1</sup>Scarcely.<sup>2</sup>learning.<sup>3</sup>i.e. it is all dumb show.<sup>4</sup>joke.<sup>5</sup>i.e. the mitre.

What trow ye they say more  
Of the bishops' lore?  
How in matters they be raw,  
They lumber forth the law,  
To hearken Jack and Jill,  
When they put up a bill,<sup>1</sup>  
And judge it as they will,  
For other men's skill,  
Expounding out their clauses,  
And leave their own causes.  
In their provincial cure  
They make but little sure,  
And meddle very light  
In the Church's right;  
But *ire* and *venire*,  
And sol-fa so a-la-mi-re,  
That the praemunire  
Is like to be set afire  
In their jurisdictions  
Through temporal afflictions.  
Men say they have prescriptions  
Against spiritual contradictions,  
Accounting them as fictions!

And while the heads do this,  
The remnant is amiss  
Of the clergy all,  
Both great and small.  
I wot never how they wark,  
But thus the people bark,  
And surely thus they say:  
Bishops, if they may,  
Small houses wouldê keep,  
Not slumber forth and sleep,<sup>2</sup>  
And essay to creep  
Within the noble walls

<sup>1</sup>a text (here).<sup>2</sup>sleep away from their residences.

Of the king's halls,  
 To fat their bodies full,  
 Their souls lean and dull,  
 And have full little care  
 How evil their sheep fare!

The temporality say plain,  
 How bishops disdain  
 Sermons for to make,  
 Or such labour to take.  
 And, for to say troth,  
 A great part is for sloth,  
 But the greatest part  
 Is they have little art  
 And right slender conning  
 Within their heads winning.<sup>1</sup>  
 But this reason they take:  
 How they are able to make  
 With their gold and treasure  
 Clerks out of measure, —  
 And yet that is a pleasure!  
 Howbeit some there be  
 (Almost two or three)  
 Of that dignitie,  
 Full worshipful clerks,  
 As appeareth by their warks,  
 Like Aaron and Ure,<sup>2</sup>  
 The wolf from the door  
 To werrin<sup>3</sup> and to keep  
 From their ghostly sheep,  
 And their spiritual lambs  
 Sequestered from rams  
 And from the bearded goats  
 With their hairy coats,  
 Set nought by gold ne groats, —  
 Their names if I durst tell!

<sup>1</sup>dwelling.<sup>2</sup>i.e. Urias.<sup>3</sup>ward off.

But they are loth to mell,<sup>1</sup>  
 And loth to hang the bell  
 About the cat's neck,<sup>2</sup>  
 For dread to have a check;  
 They are fain to play deuz deck<sup>3</sup>!  
 They are made for the beck<sup>4</sup>!  
 Howbeit they are good men,  
 Much hearted like a hen<sup>5</sup>!  
 Their lessons forgotten they have  
 That Becket them gave:  
 Thomas *manum mittit ad fortia,*  
*Spernit damna, spernit opprobria,*  
*Nulla Thomam frangit injuria!*<sup>6</sup>  
 But now every spiritual father,  
 Men say, they had rather  
 Spend much of their share  
 Than be 'cumbered with care.  
 Spend! nay, nay, but spare!  
 For let see who that dare  
 Shoe the mockish mare<sup>7</sup>;  
 They make her wince and kick,  
 But it is not worth a leek:  
 Boldness is to seek<sup>8</sup>  
 The Church for to defend.  
 Take me as I intend,  
 For loth I am to offend  
 In this that I have penn'd:  
 I tell you as men say.

<sup>1</sup>interfere.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. loth to warn their congregations against the most corrupt prelates.

<sup>3</sup>A card-game.    <sup>4</sup>nod of command.    <sup>5</sup>i.e. chicken-hearted.

<sup>6</sup>... puts his hand to braver things,  
 Spurns loss, spurns dishonour,  
 No hurt daunts Thomas.

<sup>7</sup>Shoe-the-Mare was a Christmas game – a kind of Blindman's Buff. Here it seems to mean: Catch the chief offender.

<sup>8</sup>far to seek.

Amend when ye may,  
 For, *usque ad montem Seir*,<sup>1</sup>  
 Men say ye cannot appeire<sup>2</sup>!  
 For some say ye hunt in parks,  
 And hawk on hobby larks,<sup>3</sup>  
 And other wanton warks,  
 When the night darks.

What hath lay men to do  
 The gray goose for to shoe?<sup>4</sup>  
 Like hounds of hell,  
 They cry and they yell,  
 How that ye sell  
 The grace of the Holy Ghost!  
 Thus they make their boast  
 Throughout every coast,  
 How some of you do eat  
 In Lenten season flesh meat,  
 Pheasant, partridge, and cranes;  
 Men call you, therefore, profanes!  
 Ye pick no shrimps nor prawns,<sup>5</sup>  
 Salt-fish, stock-fish, nor herring,  
 It is not for your wearing<sup>6</sup>;  
 Nor in holy Lenten season  
 Ye will neither beans ne peason,<sup>7</sup>  
 But ye look to be let loose  
 To a pig or to a goose;  
 Your gorge not endowed<sup>8</sup>  
 Without a capon stewed,  
 Or a stewéd cock,  
 To know what is a' clock  
 Under her surfléd<sup>9</sup> smock,  
 And her wanton woodcock!

<sup>1</sup>"even as far as Mount Seir" (Joshua xv. 10).

<sup>2</sup>be worse than ye are already.

<sup>3</sup>hawk at larks with a hobby — i.e. a small hawk.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. meddle in everything — a proverbial expression.

<sup>5</sup>prawns.    <sup>6</sup>use.    <sup>7</sup>peas.    <sup>8</sup>digested.    <sup>9</sup>embroidered.



And how when ye give orders  
 In your provincial borders,  
 As at *Siiientes*,<sup>1</sup>  
 Some are *insufficientes*,<sup>2</sup>  
 Some *parum sapientes*,<sup>3</sup>  
 Some *nihil intelligentes*,<sup>4</sup>  
 Some *valde negligentes*,<sup>5</sup>  
 Some *nullum sensum habentes*,<sup>6</sup>  
 But bestial and untaught.  
 But when they have once caught  
*Dominus vobiscum* by the head<sup>7</sup>  
 Then run they in every stead,<sup>8</sup>  
 God wot, with drunken nolls!<sup>9</sup>  
 Yet take they cure of souls,  
 And wotteth never what they read,  
 Paternoster, Ave, nor Creed;  
 Construe not worth a whistle  
 Neither Gospel nor Epistle;  
 Their matins madly said,  
 Nothing devoutly prayed;  
 Their learning is so small,  
 Their primes and hours<sup>10</sup> fall  
 And leap out of their lips  
 Like sawdust or dry chips!  
 I speak not now of all,  
 But the most part in generall.  
 Of such vagabundus<sup>11</sup>  
 Speaketh *totus mundus*<sup>12</sup>;  
 How some sing *Laetabundus*  
 At every ale stake,<sup>13</sup>  
 With, "Welcome, hake and make<sup>14</sup>!"

<sup>1</sup>i.e. at mass — particularly on Passion Sunday.      <sup>2</sup>ineffectual.

<sup>3</sup>not sufficiently learned.      <sup>4</sup>not even competent.

<sup>5</sup>utterly careless.      <sup>6</sup>having no sense at all.

<sup>7</sup>when they have once become priests.      <sup>8</sup>place.      <sup>9</sup>noddles.

<sup>10</sup>i.e. devotions and prayers.      <sup>11</sup>vagabonds.

<sup>12</sup>all the world.      <sup>13</sup>ale-sign.

<sup>14</sup>idle loitering companions (here, "wanton lasses").

## MAJOR SATIRES

By the bread that God brake,  
 I am sorry for your sake!  
 I speak not of the good wife,  
 But of their apostles' life<sup>1</sup>:  
*Cum ipsis vel illis*  
*Qui manet in villis*  
*Est uxor vel ancilla*<sup>2</sup> –  
 Welcome Jack and Jilla!  
 My pretty Petronilla,  
 An you will be stilla,  
 You shall have your willa!  
 Of such Paternoster pekes<sup>3</sup>  
 All the world speaks.

In you the fault is supposed,  
 For that they are not apposed<sup>4</sup>  
 By just examination  
 In conning and conversation;  
 They have none instruction  
 To make a true construction.  
 A priest without a letter,<sup>5</sup>  
 Without his virtue be gretter,  
 Doubtless were much better  
 Upon him for to take  
 A mattock or a rake.  
 Alas, for very shame!  
 Some cannot decline their name,  
 Some can scarcely read,  
 And yet he will not dread  
 For to keep a cure,  
 And in nothing is sure!  
 This *Dominus vobiscum*,  
 As wise as Tom a' thrum,

<sup>1</sup>i.e. of the lives of *their* (the priests') followers.

<sup>2</sup>With those very fellows [i.e. prelates] who live in villas is a wife or a maid.

<sup>3</sup>clerical fellows.

<sup>4</sup>questioned.

<sup>5</sup>illiterate.

A chaplain of trust  
Layeth all in the dust!

Thus I, Colin Clout,  
As I go about,  
And wand'ring as I walk  
I hear the people talk.  
Men say, for silver and gold  
Mitres are bought and sold;  
There shall no clergy appose<sup>1</sup>  
A mitre nor a crose,<sup>2</sup>  
But a full purse:  
A straw for God's curse!  
What are they the worse?  
For a simoniac  
Is but a hermoniac;  
And no more ye make  
Of simony, men say,  
But a child's play!

Over this, the foresaid lay,  
Report how the Pope may  
An holy anchor<sup>3</sup> call  
Out of the stony wall,  
And him a bishop make,  
If he on him dare take  
To keep so hard a rule  
To ride upon a mule<sup>4</sup>  
With gold all betrapped,  
In purple and pall<sup>5</sup> belapped;  
Some hatted and some capped,  
Richly and warm bewrapped,  
(God wot to their great pains!)  
In rochets<sup>6</sup> of fine Rennes,  
White as morrow's milk;

<sup>1</sup>no learning procure.

<sup>2</sup>crozier.

<sup>3</sup>anchorite.

<sup>4</sup>This passage refers directly to Wolsey.

<sup>5</sup>rich trappings.

<sup>6</sup>frocks of fine lawn – here, of Rennes linen – worn by prelates.

## MAJOR SATIRES

Their tabards<sup>1</sup> of fine silk,  
 Their stirrups with gold begared<sup>2</sup>:  
 There may no cost be spared.  
 Their mules gold do eat:  
 Their neighbours die for meat.

What care they though Jill sweat,  
 Or Jack of the Noke?  
 The poor people they yoke  
 With summons and citations  
 And excommunications,  
 About churches and market.  
 The bishop on his carpet  
 At home full soft doth sit.  
 This is a farly fit,<sup>3</sup>  
 To hear the people jangle,  
 How warly<sup>4</sup> they wrangle!  
 Alas, why do ye not handle  
 And them all to-mangle?  
 Full falsely on you they lie,  
 And shamefully you ascry,<sup>5</sup>  
 And say as untruly  
 That a butterfly  
 (A man might say in mock)  
 Were the weathercock  
 Of the steeple of Poulès<sup>6</sup>!  
 And thus they hurt their soulès  
 In slandering you for truth.  
 Alas, it is great ruth!  
 Some say ye sit in thronès,  
 Like princes *aquilonis*,<sup>7</sup>  
 And shrine your rotten bones  
 With pearls and precious stones;  
 But how the commons groans,

<sup>1</sup>mantles.<sup>2</sup>adorned.<sup>3</sup>strange story<sup>4</sup>In how war-like a manner.<sup>5</sup>call out against.<sup>6</sup>Paul's.<sup>7</sup>Lucifers.

And the people moans  
 For prestès<sup>1</sup> and for loans  
 Lent and never paid,<sup>2</sup>  
 But from day to day delayed,  
 The commonwealth decayed,  
 Men say ye are tongue-tayed,<sup>3</sup>  
 And thereof speak nothing  
 But dissimuling and glosing.  
 Wherefore men be supposing  
 That ye give shrewd counsell  
 Against the common well,  
 By polling and pillage<sup>4</sup>  
 In cities and village.  
 By taxing and tollage,  
 Ye make monks to have the culerage<sup>5</sup>  
 For<sup>6</sup> covering of an old cottage,  
 That committed is a college  
 In the charter of dotage,  
*Tenure par service de sottage,*  
 And not *par service de socage*,<sup>7</sup>  
 After old seigneurs,  
 And the learning of Littleton's<sup>8</sup> *Tenures*.  
 Ye have so overthwarted,  
 That good laws are subverted,  
 And good reason perverted.

Religious men are fain  
 For to turn again  
*In secula seculorum*,<sup>9</sup>  
 And to forsake their quorum  
 And *vagabundare per forum*,<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>i.e. forced advances.<sup>2</sup>i.e. paid back.<sup>3</sup>tongue-tied.<sup>4</sup>cheating and robbing.<sup>5</sup>i.e. piles.<sup>6</sup>i.e. For want of.<sup>7</sup>i.e. held for being sots and not as payment for labours done.<sup>8</sup>A lawyer temp. Edward IV. He wrote a book known as Littleton's *Tenures*.<sup>9</sup>To secular pursuits.<sup>10</sup>to wander through the market-place.

And take a fine *meritorium*,  
*Contra regulam morum*,  
*Aut black monachorum*,  
*Aut canonicorum*,  
*Aut Bernardinorum*,  
*Aut crucifixorum*,<sup>1</sup>  
 And to sing from place to place,  
 Like apostataas.

And the selfsame game  
 Begone is now with shame  
 Amongst the silly nuns:  
 My lady now she runs,  
 Dame Sibyl our abbess,  
 Dame Dorothy and lady Bess,  
 Dame Sara our prioress,  
 Out of their cloister and quere<sup>2</sup>  
 With an heavy cheer,  
 Must cast up their black veils  
 And set up their fuck-sails,<sup>3</sup>  
 To catch wind with their ventailes –  
 What, Colin, there thou shales<sup>4</sup>!  
 Yet thus with ill-hails<sup>5</sup>  
 The lay people rails.

And all the fault they lay  
 On your precept,<sup>6</sup> and say  
 Ye do them wrong and no right

<sup>1</sup>to beg, or work for money, contrary to the rule of their order, and contrary to the canons of the Benedictines, or of the Cistercians, or of . . . [?].

<sup>2</sup>choir.

<sup>3</sup>foresails – fashionable, lay head-dress.

<sup>4</sup>stumbles.

<sup>5</sup>unhealthily.

<sup>6</sup>So MS. Dyce has “you prelates.” But the former reading seems to be justified, as all the following passage (as well as much of the foregoing) would seem to refer to Wolsey’s suppression of the smaller monasteries. So that here the satire would be levelled directly at him.

To put them thus to flight;  
No matins at midnight,  
Book and chalice gone quite;  
And pluck away the leads  
Even over their heads,  
And sell away their bells,  
And all that they have else!  
Thus the people tells,  
Rails like rebels,  
Redes shrewdly and spells,<sup>1</sup>  
And with foundations mells,<sup>2</sup>  
And talks like titivells,<sup>3</sup>  
How ye brake the dead's wills,  
Turn monasteries into water-mills;  
Of an abbey ye make a grange  
(Your works, they say, are strange)  
So that their founders' souls  
Have lost their bead-rolls,<sup>4</sup>  
The money for their masses  
Spent among wanton lasses;  
The *Diriges* are forgotten;  
Their founders lie there rotten!  
But where their soulés dwell,  
Therewith I will not mell.  
What could the Turk do more  
With all his falsé lore,  
Turk, Saracen, or Jew?  
I report me to you,  
O merciful Jesu!  
You support and rescue,  
My style for to direct,  
It may take some effect!  
For I abhor to write  
How the laity dispight  
You prelates, that of right

<sup>1</sup>Talks . . . preaches.<sup>2</sup>meddles.<sup>3</sup>worthless knaves.<sup>4</sup>prayers.

Should be lanterns of light.  
 Ye live, they say, in delight,  
 Drowned in *deliciis*,  
 In *gloria et divitiis*,  
 In *admirabili honore*,  
 In *gloria et splendore*  
*Fulgurantis hastae*,  
*Viventes parum caste*.<sup>1</sup>  
 Yet sweet meat hath sour sauce:  
 For after *gloria, laus*,<sup>2</sup>  
 Christ by crueltye  
 Was nailed upon a tree;  
 He paid a bitter pension  
 For man's redemption;  
 He drank eisel<sup>3</sup> and gall  
 To redeem us withal;  
 But sweet hippocras ye drink,  
 With, "Let the cat wink!"  
 I wot what each other think!  
 Howbeit, *per assimile*,<sup>4</sup>  
 Some men think that ye  
 Shall have penaltie  
 For your iniquitie.  
 Note what I say,  
 And bear it well away.  
 If it please not theologues,  
 It is good for astrologues:  
 For Ptolemy told me  
 The sun sometime to be  
*In Ariete*

<sup>1</sup> . . . in luxury,  
 In glory and riches,  
 In amazing state,  
 In pomp and magnificence  
 With splendid possessions,  
 Living unchastely.

<sup>2</sup>glory, praise.

<sup>3</sup>vinegar.

<sup>4</sup>in like manner.



Ascendant a degree,  
When Scorpion descending  
Was so then portending  
A fatal fall of one<sup>1</sup>  
That should sit on a throne,  
And rule all things alone.  
Your teeth whet on this bone  
Amongst you every one,  
And let Colin Clout have none  
Manner of cause to moan!  
Lay salve to your own sore,  
For else, as I said before,  
After *gloria, laus*,  
May come a sour sauce.  
Sorry therefore am I,  
But truth can never lie!

With language thus polluted  
Holy Church is bruted  
And shamefully confuted.  
My pen now will I sharp,  
And wrest<sup>2</sup> up my harp  
With sharp twinkling trebles,  
Against all such rebels  
That labour to confound  
And bring the Church to the ground;  
As ye may daily see  
How the laitie  
Of one affinitie  
Consent and agree  
Against the Church to be,  
And the dignitie  
Of the bishops' see.

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Wolsey. This passage used to be known as "Skelton's  
Prophecy."

<sup>2</sup>tune.

## MAJOR SATIRES

And either ye be too bad,  
 Or else they are mad  
 Of this to report.  
 But, under your support,  
 Till my dying day  
 I shall both write and say,  
 And ye shall do the same,  
 How they are to blame  
 You thus to defame:  
 For it maketh me sad  
 How that the people are glad  
 The Church to deprave;  
 And some there are that rave,  
 Presuming on their wit,  
 When there is never a whit  
 To maintain arguments  
 Against the sacraments.

Some make epiloguation  
 Of high predestination;  
 And of recidivation  
 They make interpretation  
 Of an awkward fashion;  
 And of the prescience  
 Of divine essence;  
 And what hypostasis  
 Of Christ's manhood is.  
 Such logic men will chop,  
 And in their fury hop,  
 When the good ale sop  
 Doth dance in their fore top<sup>1</sup>!  
 Both women and men,  
 Such ye may well know and ken,  
 That against priesthode  
 Their malice spread abroad,  
 Railing heinously

<sup>1</sup>heads.

And disdainously  
Of priestly dignities,  
And their malignities.

And some have a smack  
Of Luther's sack,  
And a burning spark  
Of Luther's wark,  
And are somewhat suspect  
In Luther's sect;  
And some of them bark,  
Clatter and carp  
Of that heresiarch  
Called Wicliffista,  
The devilish dogmatista;  
And some be Hussians,  
And some be Arians,<sup>1</sup>  
And some be Pelagians,  
And make much variance  
Between the clergy  
And the temporalty,  
How the Church hath too mickle,  
And they have too little,  
And bring in materialities  
And qualified qualities  
Of pluralities,  
Of trialities,<sup>2</sup>  
And of tot quotes<sup>3</sup>  
They commune like sots,  
As cometh to their lots;  
Of prebendaries and deans,  
How some of them gleans  
And gathereth up the store  
For to catch more and more;  
Of parsons and vicaries  
They make many outcries —

<sup>1</sup>followers of Arius.

<sup>2</sup>triple benefices.

<sup>3</sup>dispensations.

## MAJOR SATIRES

They cannot keep their wives  
 From them for their lives!  
 And thus the losells<sup>1</sup> strives,  
 And lewdly says by Christ  
 Against the silly priest.  
 Alas, and well away,  
 What ails them thus to say?  
 They might be better advised  
 Than to be so disguised!<sup>2</sup>  
 But they have enterprised,  
 And shamefully surmised,  
 How prelacy is sold and bought,  
 And come up of nought;  
 And where the prelates be  
 Come of low degree,  
 And set in majestie  
 And spiritual dignitie,  
 Farewell benigntie,  
 Farewell simplicitie,  
 Farewell humilitie,  
 Farewell good charitie!

Ye are so puffed with pride,  
 That no man may abide  
 Your high and lordly looks:  
 Ye cast up then your books,  
 And virtue is forgotten;  
 For then ye will be wroken<sup>3</sup>  
 Of every light quarrel,  
 And call a lord a javel,<sup>4</sup>  
 A knight a knave ye make;  
 Ye boast, ye face, ye crake,<sup>5</sup>  
 And upon you ye take  
 To rule both king and kayser<sup>6</sup>;  
 And if ye may have layser,<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>worthless fellows.    <sup>2</sup>behave so badly.    <sup>3</sup>revenged.    <sup>4</sup>knave,  
<sup>5</sup>face it out and vaunt.    <sup>6</sup>emperor.    <sup>7</sup>leisure.

Ye will bring all to nought,  
And that is all your thought!<sup>1</sup>  
For the lords temporal,  
Their rule is very small,  
Almost nothing at all.  
Men say how ye appal  
The noble blood royal.  
In earnest and in game,  
Ye are the less to blame,  
For lords of noble blood,  
If they well understood  
How conning might them advance,  
They would pipe you another dance.  
But noblemen born  
To learn they have scorn,  
But hunt and blow an horn,  
Leap over lakes and dykes,  
Set nothing by politics!  
Therefore ye keep them base,  
And mock them to their face.  
This is a piteous case!  
To you that be on the wheel<sup>2</sup>  
Great lords must crouch and kneel,  
And break their hose at the knee,  
As daily men may see,  
And to remembrance call:  
Fortune so turneth the ball  
And ruleth so over all,  
That honour hath a great fall.

Shall I tell you more? yea, shall.  
I am loth to tell all;  
But the commonalty you call  
Idols of Babylon,  
*De Terra Zabulon,*

<sup>1</sup>This refers to Wolsey, of course.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. atop of Fortune's wheel.

*De Terra* Neptalim;  
 For ye love to go trim,  
 Brought up of poor estate,  
 With pride inordinate,  
 Suddenly upstart  
 From the dung-cart,  
 The mattock and the shule,<sup>1</sup>  
 To reign and to rule;  
 And have no grace to think  
 How ye were wont to drink  
 Of a leather bottle  
 With a knavish stopple,  
 When mannocks<sup>2</sup> was your meat,  
 With mouldy bread to eat;  
 Ye could none other get  
 To chew and to gnaw,  
 To fill therewith your maw;  
 Lodging in fair straw,  
 Couching your drowsy heads  
 Sometime in lousy beds.  
 Alas, this is out of mind!  
 Ye grow now out of kind<sup>3</sup>:  
 Many one ye have untwined,<sup>4</sup>  
 And make the commons blind.  
 But *qui se existimat stare*,<sup>5</sup>  
 Let him well beware  
 Lest that his foot slip,  
 And have such a trip,  
 And fall in such decay,  
 That all the world may say,  
 "Come down, in the Devil way!"

Yet, over<sup>6</sup> all that,  
 Of bishops they chat,

<sup>1</sup>shovel.<sup>2</sup>leavings.<sup>3</sup>unnatural.<sup>4</sup>destroyed.<sup>5</sup>"who thinketh he standeth . . ." *et seq.* (1 Cor. x. 12).<sup>6</sup>besides.

That though ye round your hair  
 An inch above your ear,  
 And have *aures patentes*<sup>1</sup>  
 And *parum intendentes*,<sup>2</sup>  
 And your tonsures be croppéd,  
 Your ears they be stoppéd!  
 For master *Adulator*,<sup>3</sup>  
 And doctor *Assentator*,<sup>4</sup>  
 And *Blandior blandiris*,<sup>5</sup>  
 With *Mentior mentiris*,<sup>6</sup>  
 They follow your desirés,  
 And so they blear your eye,  
 That ye cannot espy  
 How the male doth wry.<sup>7</sup>

Alas, for God's will,  
 Why sit ye, prelates, still  
 And suffer all this ill?  
 Ye bishops of estates<sup>8</sup>  
 Should open the broad gates  
 Of your spiritual charge,  
 And come forth at large,  
 Like lanterns of light,  
 In the people's sight,  
 In pulpits authentic,  
 For the weal public  
 Of priesthood in this case;  
 And always to chase  
 Such manner of schismatics  
 And half heretics,  
 That would intoxicate,  
 That would coinquinate,  
 That would contaminate,  
 And that would violate,

<sup>1</sup>open ears.<sup>2</sup>too little hearing.<sup>3</sup>Sycophant.<sup>4</sup>Assenter.<sup>5</sup>I flatter, you flatter.<sup>6</sup>I lie, you lie.<sup>7</sup>How everything goes awry.<sup>8</sup>of high rank.

## MAJOR SATIRES

And that would derogate,  
 And that would abrogate  
 The Church's high estates,<sup>1</sup>  
 After this manner rates, —  
 The which should be  
 Both frank and free,  
 And have their libertie,  
 As of antiquitie  
 It was ratified,  
 And also gratified,  
 By holy synodals  
 And bulls papals,  
 As it is *res certa*  
 Contained in *Magna Charta*.

But master Damyan,<sup>2</sup>  
 Or some other man,  
 That clerkly is and can  
 Well scripture expound  
 And his texts ground,  
 His benefice worth ten pound,  
 Or scant worth twenty mark,  
 And yet a noble clerk,  
 He must do this wark;  
 As I know a part,  
 Some masters of art,  
 Some doctors of law,  
 Some learned in other saw,  
 As in divinitie,  
 That hath no dignitie  
 But the poor degree  
 Of the universitie;  
 Or else friar Frederick,  
 Or else friar Dominick,  
 Or friar Hugulinus,

<sup>1</sup>dignities.

<sup>2</sup>The name of the squire in Chaucer's Merchant's Tale.



Or friar Augustinus,  
Or friar Carmelus,  
That ghostly<sup>1</sup> can heal us;  
Or else if we may  
Get a friar gray,  
Or else of the order  
Upon Greenwich border,  
Called Observance,  
Or a friar of France;  
Or else the poor Scot,  
It must come to his lot  
To shoot forth his shot;  
Or of Babwell beside Bury,  
To postel<sup>2</sup> upon a *Kyrie*,  
That would it should be noted  
How scripture should be quoted,  
And so clerkly promoted;  
And yet the friar doted.

But men say your authoritie,  
And your noble see,  
And your dignitie,  
Should be imprinted better  
Than all the friars' letter;  
For if ye would take pain  
To preach a word or twain,  
Though it were never so plain,  
With clauses two or three,  
So as they might be  
Compendiously conveyed,  
These words should be more weighed,  
And better perceived,  
And thankfullerly received,  
And better should remain  
Among the people plain,  
That would your words retain

<sup>1</sup>spiritually.<sup>2</sup>annotate.

And rehearse them again,  
 Than a thousand thousand other  
 That blabber, bark, and blother,  
 And make a Welshman's hose<sup>1</sup>  
 Of the text and of the glose.<sup>2</sup>

For protestation made,  
 That I will not wade  
 Farther in this brook,  
 Nor farther for to look  
 In devising of this book,  
 But answer that I may  
 For myself alway,  
 Either *analogice*<sup>3</sup>  
 Or else *categorice*,<sup>4</sup>  
 So that in divinity  
 Doctors that learnéd be,  
 Nor bachelors of that faculty  
 That hath taken degree  
 In the university,  
 Shall not be object at by me.

But doctor Bullatus,<sup>5</sup>  
*Parum litteratus*,<sup>6</sup>  
*Dominus doctoratus*  
 At the Broadgatus,<sup>7</sup>  
 Doctor Dawpatus,  
 And bachelor *bacheleratus*,  
 Drunken as a mouse,  
 At the ale house,  
 Taketh his pillion<sup>8</sup> and his cap  
 At the good ale tap,  
 For lack of good wine;

<sup>1</sup>i.e. turn it anyway to suit their purpose.

<sup>2</sup>glossary.

<sup>3</sup>analogically.

<sup>4</sup>categorically.

<sup>5</sup>Puffed-up.

<sup>6</sup>Too little learned.

<sup>7</sup>Broadgates Hall, Oxford, now Pembroke College.

<sup>8</sup>skull-cap.

As wise as Robin swine,  
 Under a notary's sign  
 Was made a divine;  
 As wise as Waltham's calf,<sup>1</sup>  
 Must preach, a God's half,  
 In the pulpit solemnly –  
 More meet in the pillory!  
 For, by saint Hillary,  
 He can nothing smatter  
 Of logic nor school matter,  
 Neither *sylogisare*,<sup>2</sup>  
 Nor *enthymemare*,<sup>3</sup>  
 Nor knoweth his elenchs,<sup>4</sup>  
 Nor his predicaments<sup>5</sup>;  
 And yet he will mell  
 To amend the Gospél,  
 And will preach and tell  
 What they do in hell;  
 And he dare not well neven<sup>6</sup>  
 What they do in heaven,  
 Nor how far Temple Bar is  
 From the Seven Starrès.

Now will I go  
 And tell of other mo,  
*Semper protestando*  
*De non impugnando*<sup>7</sup>  
 The four orders of friars,  
 Though some of them be liars;  
 As Limiters<sup>8</sup> at large  
 Will charge and discharge;

<sup>1</sup>Waltham's calf ran nine miles to suck a bull.      <sup>2</sup>sylogise.

<sup>3</sup>construct an enthymeme.      <sup>4</sup>elenchus – in logic.

<sup>5</sup>In logic.      <sup>6</sup>name.

<sup>7</sup>Always protesting  
About not attacking.

<sup>8</sup>Friars licensed to beg within certain districts.

As many a friar, God wote,  
 Preaches for his groat,  
 Flattering for a new coat  
 And for to have his fees;  
 Some to gather cheese;  
 Loth they are to lese<sup>1</sup>  
 Either corn or malt;  
 Sometime meal and salt,  
 Sometime a bacon flick,<sup>2</sup>  
 That is three fingers thick  
 Of lard and of grease,  
 Their convent to increase.

I put you out of doubt,  
 This can not be brought about  
 But they their tongues file,  
 And make a pleasant style  
 To Margery and to Maud,  
 How they have no fraud;  
 And sometime they provoke  
 Both Jill and Jack at Noke  
 Their duties to withdraw,  
 That they ought by the law  
 Their curates to content  
 In open time<sup>3</sup> and Lent.  
 God wot, they take great pain  
 To flatter and to feign;  
 But it is an old-said saw,  
 That need hath no law.  
 Some walk about in melotes,<sup>4</sup>  
 In gray russet and hairy coats;  
 Some will neither gold nor groats;  
 Some pluck a partridge in remotes,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>lose.<sup>2</sup>fitch.<sup>3</sup>When no fasts were imposed.<sup>4</sup>skin or hair garments, reaching from neck to loins, worn by monks during manual labour.<sup>5</sup>remote places.

And by the bars of her tail  
 Will know a raven from a rail,  
 A quail, the rail, and the old raven!  
*Sed libera nos a malo!*<sup>1</sup> Amen.  
 And by *Dudum*, their Clementine,<sup>2</sup>  
 Against curates they repine;  
 And say properly they are *sacerdotes*,<sup>3</sup>  
 To shrive, assoyle,<sup>4</sup> and release  
 Dame Margery's soul out of hell.  
 But when the friar fell in the well,  
 He could not sing himself thereout  
 But by the help of Christian Clout.<sup>5</sup>  
 Another Clementine also,  
 How friar Fabian, with other mo,  
*Exivit de Paradiso*;  
 When they again thither shall come,  
*De hoc petimus consilium*:  
 And through all the world they go  
 With *Dirige* and *Placebo*.<sup>6</sup>

But now my mind ye understand,  
 For they must take in hand  
 To preach, and to withstand  
 All manner of objections;  
 For bishops have protections,  
 They say, to do corrections,  
 But they have no affections  
 To take the said directions.  
 In such manner of cases,  
 Men say, they bear no faces

<sup>1</sup>But deliver us from evil!

<sup>2</sup>A bull of Clement V beginning with the word *Dudum* (see *Clement*, lib. III., tit. vii., cap. 2).

<sup>3</sup>priests.

<sup>4</sup>confess, absolve.

<sup>5</sup>Or Christine Clout, feminine of Colin Clout. Refers to the ballad *The Friar Well-fitted* (see *Ballads*, British Museum, 643 m).

<sup>6</sup>Dyce notes: "Considerable mutilation of the text may be suspected here."

To occupy such places,  
 To sow the seed of graces:  
 Their hearts are so fainted,  
 And they be so attainted  
 With covetous<sup>1</sup> and ambition,  
 And other superstition,  
 That they be deaf and dumb,  
 And play silence and glum,  
 Can say nothing but "Mum!"

They occupy them so  
 With singing *Placebo*,  
 They will no farther go:  
 They had liefer<sup>2</sup> to please,  
 And take their worldly ease,  
 Than to take on hand  
 Worshipfully to withstand  
 Such temporal war and bate<sup>3</sup>  
 As now is made of late  
 Against Holy Church estate,  
 Or to maintain good quarrels.  
 The lay men call them barrels  
 Full of gluttony  
 And of hypocrisy,  
 That counterfeits and paints<sup>4</sup>  
 As they were very saints.  
 In matters that them like  
 They shew them politic,  
 Pretending gravity  
 And signiority,  
 With all solemnity,  
 For their indemnity!  
 For they will have no loss  
 Of a penny nor of a cross<sup>5</sup>  
 Of their predial lands,

<sup>1</sup>covetousness.<sup>2</sup>rather.<sup>3</sup>debate.<sup>4</sup>feigns.<sup>5</sup>Coins so marked.

That cometh to their hands:  
 And as far as they dare set,  
 All is fish that cometh to net.  
 Building royally<sup>1</sup>  
 Their mansions curiously,  
 With turrets and with towers,  
 With halls and with bowers,  
 Stretching to the stars,  
 With glass windows and bars;  
 Hanging about the walls  
 Cloths of gold and palls,<sup>2</sup>  
 Arras of rich array,  
 Fresh as flowers in May;  
 With dame Diana naked;  
 How lusty Venus quakéd,  
 And how Cupid shakéd  
 His dart, and bent his bow  
 For to shoot a crow<sup>3</sup>  
 At her tirlly tirlow;  
 And how Paris of Troy  
 Danced a lege de moy,  
 Made lusty sport and joy  
 With dame Helen the queen;  
 With such stories bydene<sup>4</sup>  
 Their chambers well besene<sup>5</sup>;  
 With triumphs of Cæsar,  
 And of Pompeius' war,  
 Of renown and of fame,  
 By them to get a name.<sup>6</sup>  
 Now all the world stares,  
 How they ride in goodly chairs,  
 Conveyed by elephants,  
 With laureate garlands,

<sup>1</sup>Refers especially to Wolsey's building of Hampton Court.

<sup>2</sup>fine stuffs.

<sup>3</sup>an arrow.

<sup>4</sup>together.

<sup>5</sup>adorned.

<sup>6</sup>This, and the following, is a description of a definite set of tapestries at Hampton Court known as "Petrarch's Triumphs."

And by unicorns  
 With their seemly horns;  
 Upon these beasts riding,  
 Naked boys striding,  
 With wanton wenches winking.  
 Now truly, to my thinking,  
 That is a speculation  
 And a meet meditation  
 For prelates of estate,<sup>1</sup>  
 Their corage<sup>2</sup> to abate  
 From worldly wantonness,  
 Their chambers thus to dress  
 With such perfectness  
 And all such holiness!  
 Howbeit they let down fall  
 Their churches cathedral.

Squire, knight, and lord,  
 Thus the Church remord<sup>3</sup>;  
 With all temporal people  
 They run against the steeple,  
 Thus talking and telling  
 How some of you are melling<sup>4</sup>;  
 Yet soft and fair for swelling –  
 Beware of a quean's yelling.<sup>5</sup>  
 It is a busy thing  
 For one man to rule a king  
 Alone and make reckoning,  
 To govern over all  
 And rule a realm royal  
 By one man's very wit.  
 Fortune may chance to flit,  
 And when he weeneth<sup>6</sup> to sit,  
 Yet may he miss the cushion:  
 For I rede<sup>7</sup> a preposition –

<sup>1</sup>of high rank.<sup>2</sup>affection.<sup>3</sup>blame.<sup>4</sup>meddling.<sup>5</sup>i.e. a woman's chatter.<sup>6</sup>thinketh.<sup>7</sup>tell.



*Cum regibus amicare,*  
*Et omnibus dominari,*  
*Et supra te pravare.*<sup>1</sup>  
 Wherefore he hath good ure<sup>2</sup>  
 That can himself assure  
 How fortune will endure.  
 Then let reason you support,  
 For the commonalty doth report  
 That they have great wonder  
 That ye keep them so under;  
 Yet they marvel so much less,  
 For ye play so at the chess,  
 As they suppose and guess,  
 That some of you but late  
 Hath played so check-mate  
 With lords of great estate,  
 After such a rate,  
 That they shall mell nor make,  
 Nor upon them take,  
 For king's nor kayser's sake,  
 But at the pleasure of one  
 That ruleth the roost alone.

Helas, I say, helas!  
 How may this come to pass,  
 That a man shall hear a mass,  
 And not so hardy on his head<sup>3</sup>  
 To look on God in form of bread,  
 But that the parish clerk  
 Thereupon must heark,  
 And grant him at his asking  
 For to see the sacring<sup>4</sup>?

<sup>1</sup>To be friendly with kings,  
 And all things to rule,  
 And to overleap thyself.

<sup>2</sup>hap, fortune.      <sup>3</sup>i.e. not be so bold, upon pain of his head.

<sup>4</sup>sacrament.

And how may this accord,  
 No man to our sovereign lord  
 So hardy to make suit,  
 Nor yet to execute  
 His commandment,  
 Without the assent  
 Of our president,  
 Nor to express to his person,  
 Without your consentation  
 Grant him his licence  
 To press to his presence,  
 Nor to speak to him secretly,  
 Openly nor privily,  
 Without this president be by,  
 Or else his substitute  
 Whom he will depute?  
 Neither earl ne duke  
 Permitted? By saint Luke,  
 And by sweet saint Mark,  
 This is a wondrous wark!  
 That the people talké this,<sup>1</sup>  
 Somewhat there is amiss:  
 The Devil cannot stop their mouths,  
 But they will talk of such uncouths,<sup>2</sup>  
 All that ever they ken  
 Against all spiritual men!

Whether it be wrong or right,  
 Or else for despight,  
 Or however it hap,  
 Their tongues thus do clap,  
 And through such detraction  
 They put you to your action;  
 And whether they say truly  
 As they may abide thereby,  
 Or else that they do lie,  
 Ye know better than I!

<sup>1</sup>thus.<sup>2</sup>strange matters.

But now *debetis scire*,  
 And groundly *audire*,  
 In your *convenire*,  
 Of this praemunire,  
 Or else in the mirè  
 They say they will you cast:  
 Therefore stand sure and fast!

Stand sure, and take good footing,  
 And let be all your mooting,  
 Your gasping and your tooting,<sup>1</sup>  
 And your partial promoting  
 Of those that stand in your grace.  
 But old servants ye chase,  
 And put them out of their place.<sup>2</sup>  
 Make ye no murmuration,  
 Though I write after this fashion;  
 Though I, Colin Clout,  
 Among the whole rout<sup>3</sup>  
 Of you that clerks be,  
 Take now upon me  
 Thus copiously to write,  
 I do it for no despite.  
 Wherefore take no disdain  
 At my style rude and plain;  
 For I rebuke no man  
 That virtuous is: why then  
 Wreak ye your anger on me?  
 For those that virtuous be  
 Have no cause to say  
 That I speak out of the way!

Of no good bishop speak I,  
 Nor good priest I ascry,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>spying.

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps a reference to Skelton himself, who was an old Court official.

<sup>3</sup>crowd.

<sup>4</sup>attack.

Good friar, nor good chanon,  
 Good nun, nor good canon,  
 Good monk, nor good clerk,  
 Nor yet of no good wark:  
 But my recounting is  
 Of them that do amiss,  
 In speaking and rebelling,  
 In hindering and disavailing<sup>1</sup>  
 Holy Church, our mother,  
 One against another.  
 To use such despiting  
 Is all my whole writing;  
 To hinder no man,  
 As near as I can,  
 For no man have I named:  
 Wherefore should I be blamed?  
 Ye ought to be ashamed,  
 Against me to be gramed,<sup>2</sup>  
 And can tell no cause why,  
 But that I write truly!

Then if any there be  
 Of high or low degree  
 Of the spiritualitie,  
 Or of the temporalitie,  
 That doth think or ween  
 That his conscience be not clean,  
 And feeleth himself sick,  
 Or touched on the quick,  
 Such grace God them send  
 Themselves to amend, —  
 For I will not pretend  
 Any man to offend!

Wherefore, as thinketh me,  
 Great idiots they be,

<sup>1</sup>acting to the detriment of.

<sup>2</sup>angered.

And little grace they have,  
 This treatise to deprave;  
 Nor will hear no preaching,  
 Nor no virtuous teaching,  
 Nor will have no resting  
 Of any virtuous writing;  
 Will know none intelligence  
 To reform their negligence,  
 But live still out of fashion,  
 To their own damnation!  
 To do shame they have no shame,  
 But they would no man should them blame!  
 They have an evil name,  
 But yet they will occupy the same!

With them the word of God  
 Is counted for no rod;  
 They count it for a railing,  
 That nothing is availing.  
 The preachers with evil hailing:  
 "Shall they daunt us prelates,  
 That be their primates?  
 Not so hardy on their pates!  
 Hark, how the losel<sup>1</sup> prates,  
 With a wide wesaunt<sup>2</sup>!  
 Avaunt, sir Guy of Gaunt!  
 Avaunt, lewd priest, avaunt!  
 Avaunt, sir doctor Devias!  
 Prate of thy matins and thy mass,  
 And let our matters pass!  
 How darest thou, dawcock, mell?  
 How darest thou, losel,  
 Allegate<sup>3</sup> the Gospel  
 Against us of the council?  
 Avaunt to the Devil of hell!  
 Take him, Warden of the Fleet,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>knave.<sup>2</sup>gullet.<sup>3</sup>Allege.<sup>4</sup>i.e. Fleet Prison.

Set him fast by the feet!  
 I say, Lieutenant of the Tower,  
 Make this lurdain<sup>1</sup> for to lour;  
 Lodge him in Little Ease,<sup>2</sup>  
 Feed him with beans and peas!  
 The King's Bench or Marshalsea,  
 Have him thither by and by!  
 The villain preacheth openly,  
 And declareth our villany;  
 And of our free simpleness,  
 He says that we are reckless,  
 And full of wilfulness,  
 Shameless and merciless,  
 Incorrigible and insatiate;  
 And after this rate  
 Against us doth prate!

“At Paul's Cross or elsewhere,  
 Openly at Westminster,  
 And Saint Mary Spittle,  
 They set not by us a whistle!  
 At the Austin Friars  
 They count us for liars!  
 And at Saint Thomas of Akers  
 They clack of us like crakers,  
 How we will rule all at will  
 Without good reason or skill;  
 And say how that we be  
 Full of partialitie;  
 And how at a prong  
 We turn right into wrong,  
 Delay causes so long  
 That right no man can fong<sup>3</sup>;  
 They say many matters be born

<sup>1</sup>clown.

<sup>2</sup>Concerning this famous cell, see Ainsworth's *Tower of London*.

<sup>3</sup>find.

By the right of a ram's horn<sup>1</sup>!  
Is not this a shameful scorn,  
To be teared thus and torn?

"How may we this endure?  
Wherefore we make you sure,  
Ye preachers shall be yawed<sup>2</sup>;  
And some shall be sawed,  
As noble Isaias,  
The holy prophet, was;  
And some of you shall die,  
Like holy Jeremy;  
Some hanged, some slain,  
Some beaten to the brain;  
And we will rule and reign,  
And our matters maintain,  
Who dare<sup>3</sup> say there again,<sup>4</sup>  
Or who dare disdain,  
At our pleasure and will!  
For, be it good or be it ill,  
As it is, it shall be still, —  
For all master doctor of Civil,  
Or of Dominic, or doctor Drivel,  
Let him cough, rough,<sup>5</sup> or snivel!  
Run God, run Devil,  
Run who may run best,  
And let take all the rest!  
We set not a nutshell  
The way to heaven or hell!"

Lo, this is the guise nowadays!  
It is to dread, men says,  
Lest they be Sadducees,  
As they be said sain,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>By justice as crooked as a ram's horns.

<sup>2</sup>Whoever dare. (So also in next line.)

<sup>3</sup>belch.

<sup>4</sup>reported.

<sup>5</sup>cut down.

<sup>6</sup>against.

## MAJOR SATIRES

Which determined plain  
 We should not rise again  
 At dreadful doomsday.  
 And so it seemeth they play,  
 Which hate to be corrected  
 When they be infected,  
 Nor will suffer this book  
 By hook ne by crook  
 Printed for to be,  
 For that no man should see  
 Nor read in any scrolls  
 Of their drunken nolls,  
 Nor of their noddy polls,  
 Nor of their silly souls,  
 Nor of some witless pates  
 Of divers great estates,<sup>1</sup>  
 As well as other men.

Now to withdraw my pen,  
 And now a while to rest,  
 Meseemeth it for the best.

The forecastle of my ship  
 Shall glide, and smoothly slip  
 Out of the waves wood<sup>2</sup>  
 Of the stormy flood;  
 Shoot anchor, and lie at road,<sup>3</sup>  
 And sail not far abroad,  
 Till the coast be clear,  
 And the lode-star appear.  
 My ship now will I steer  
 Toward the port salu<sup>4</sup>  
 Of our Saviour Jesu,<sup>5</sup>  
 Such grace that he us send,  
 To rectify and amend

<sup>1</sup>persons of high rank.    <sup>2</sup>wild.    <sup>3</sup>in harbour.    <sup>4</sup>safe port.  
<sup>5</sup>May refer to his intention to go into sanctuary in 1523.



Things that are amiss,  
When that his pleasure is.  
Amen!

*In opere imperfecto,  
In opere semper perfecto,  
Et in opere plusquam perfecto!*<sup>1</sup>

*Colinus Cloutus, quanquam mea carmina multis  
Sordescunt stultis, sed puevinate sunt rare cultis,  
Pue vinatis altisem divino flamine flatis.  
Unde mea refert tanto minus, invida quamvis  
Lingua nocere parat, quia, quanquam rustica canto,  
Undique cantabor tamen et celebrabor ubique,  
Inclita dum maneat gens Anglica. Laurus honoris,  
Quondam regnorum regina et gloria regum,  
Heu, modo marcescit, tabescit, languida torpet!  
Ah pudet, ah miseret! vetor hic ego pandere plura  
Pro gemitu et lacrimis: praestet peto praemia paena.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In an imperfect work,  
In a work always perfect,  
And in a work more than perfect.

<sup>2</sup>[First three lines unintelligible.] Whence it concerns me so much the less, although the envious tongue prepares to hurt, because, although I sing of rustic things, yet I shall be sung about on all sides, and everywhere shall be celebrated, so long as the glorious English race remains. The laurel of honour, once the queen of possessions and the glory of kings, alas! now decays and rots and grows languid and torpid! Ah, the shame! ah, the pity! Here I am forbidden, for groaning and tears, to speak more. I pray the rewards may exceed the punishment.

*How the Doughty*  
DUKE OF ALBANY,<sup>1</sup>

*Like a Coward Knight, Ran Away Shamefully With an  
Hundred Thousand Tratling Scots and Faint-Hearted  
Frenchmen, Beside the Water of the Tweed.*

Rejoice, England,  
And understand  
These tidings new,  
Which be as true  
As the gospel:  
This duke so fell  
Of Albany,  
So cowardly,  
With all his host  
Of the Scottish coast,  
For all their boast,  
Fled like a beast;  
Wherefore to jest  
Is my delight  
Of this coward knight,  
And for to write  
In the despight  
Of the Scots rank  
Of Huntley-bank,<sup>2</sup>  
Of Lowdian,<sup>3</sup>  
Of Locrian,<sup>4</sup>  
And the ragged ray  
Of Galloway.

<sup>1</sup>Regent of Scotland during James V's minority. This poem refers to his invasion of the borders in 1523.

<sup>2</sup>Skelton often uses Scottish words throughout the poem quite at random, as "local colour."

<sup>3</sup>Lothian.

<sup>4</sup>Loch Ryan.

Dunbar, Dundee,  
Ye shall trow me,  
False Scots are ye:  
Your hearts sore fainted,  
And so attained,  
Like cowards stark,  
At the Castle of Wark,  
By the Water of Tweed,  
Ye had evil speed;  
Like cankered curs  
Ye lost your spurs,  
For in that fray  
Ye ran away,  
With, hey, dog, hey!

For Sir William Lyle  
Within short while,  
That valiant knight,  
Put you to flight;  
By his valiance  
Two thousand of France  
There he put back,  
To your great lack,<sup>1</sup>  
And utter shame  
Of your Scottish name.  
Your chief chieftain,  
Void of all brain,  
Duke of all Albany,  
Then shamefully  
He recoiled back,  
To his great lack,  
When he heard tell  
That my Lord Admiral<sup>2</sup>  
Was coming down

<sup>1</sup>reproach.<sup>2</sup>i.e. Surrey.

## MAJOR SATIRES

To make him frown  
And to make him lour,  
With the noble power  
Of my lord cardinal,  
As an hoste royal,  
After the ancient manner,  
With Saint Cuthbert's banner,  
And Saint William's also;  
Your captain ran to go,  
To go, to go, to go,  
And brake up all his host;  
For all his crake and boast,  
Like a coward knight  
He fled and durst not fight,  
He ran away by night.

But now must I  
Your Duke ascry  
Of Albany  
With a word or twain  
In sentence plain.  
Ye duke so doughty,  
So stern, so stouty,  
In short sentence  
Of your pretence  
What is the ground  
Briefly and round  
To me expound,  
Or else will I  
Evidently  
Shew as it is:  
For the cause is this,  
How ye pretend  
For to defend  
The young Scottish king,  
But ye mean a thing,  
An ye could bring  
The matter about,

To put his eyes out  
And put him down,  
And set his crown  
On your own head  
When he were dead.  
Such treachery  
And traitory  
Is all your cast;  
Thus ye have compassed  
With the French king  
A false reckoning  
To invade England,  
As I understand:  
But our king royall,  
Whose name over all,  
Noble Henry the Eight,  
Shall cast a bait,  
And set such a snare  
That shall cast you in care,  
Both King Francis and thee,  
That knowen ye shall be  
For the most recrayd<sup>1</sup>  
Cowards afraid,  
And falsest forsworn,  
That ever were born.

O ye wretched Scots,  
Ye puant<sup>2</sup> pisspots,  
It shall be your lots  
To be knit up with knots  
Of halters and ropes  
About your traitors' throats!  
O Scots perjuréd,  
Unhappy vred,<sup>3</sup>  
Ye may be assuréd  
Your falsehood discouréd<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>recreant.<sup>2</sup>stinking.<sup>3</sup>unfortunate.<sup>4</sup>discovered.

It is and shall be  
 From the Scottish sea  
 Unto Gabione!  
 For ye be false each one,  
 False and false again,  
 Never true nor plain,  
 But fleer, flatter, and feign,  
 And ever to remain  
 In wretched beggary  
 And mangy misery,  
 In lowsy loathsomeness  
 And scabbéd scurfiness,  
 And in abomination  
 Of all manner of nation,—  
 Nation most in hate,  
 Proud and poor of state!  
 Twit, Scot, go keep thy den,  
 Mell' not with Englishmen;  
 Thou did nothing but bark  
 At the Castle of Wark.  
 Twit, Scot, yet again once  
 We shall break thy bones,  
 And hang you upon poles,  
 And burn you all to coals;  
 With, twit Scot, twit Scot, twit!  
 Walk, Scot, go beg a bit  
 Of bread at each man's heck<sup>2</sup>!  
 The fiend, Scot, break thy neck!  
 Twit, Scot, again I say,  
 Twit, Scot of Galloway,  
 Twit, Scot, shake thee dog, hey!  
 Twit, Scot, thou ran away!

We set not a fly  
 By your Duke of Albany;  
 • We set not a prane<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>redde.

<sup>2</sup>hatch, door.

<sup>3</sup>prawn.

By such a drunken drane<sup>1</sup>;  
 We set not a mite  
 By such a coward knight,  
 Such a proud palliard,<sup>2</sup>  
 Such a skirgalliard,<sup>3</sup>  
 Such a stark coward,  
 Such a proud poltrown,  
 Such a foul coistrown,<sup>4</sup>  
 Such a doughty dagswain<sup>5</sup>!  
 Send him to France again,  
 To bring with him more brain  
 From King Francis of France:  
 God send them both mischance!

Ye Scots all the rabble,  
 Ye shall never be able  
 With us for to compare;  
 What though ye stamp and stare?  
 God send you sorrow and care!  
 With us whenever ye mell,  
 Yet we bear away the bell,  
 When ye cankered knaves  
 Must creep into your caves  
 Your heads for to hide,  
 For ye dare not abide.

Sir Duke of Albany,  
 Right inconveniently,<sup>6</sup>  
 Ye rage and ye rave,  
 And your worship deprave:  
 Not like Duke Hamilcar,  
 With the Romans that made war,  
 Nor like his son Hanibal,  
 Nor like Duke Hastrubal  
 Of Carthage in Afric;

<sup>1</sup>drone.      <sup>2</sup>rascal.      <sup>3</sup>runaway.      <sup>4</sup>scullion.  
<sup>5</sup>literally, a rough coverlet.      <sup>6</sup>unbecomingly.

Yet somewhat ye be like  
In some of their conditions,  
And their false seditions,  
And their dealing double,  
And their wayward trouble:  
But yet they were bold,  
And manly manifold,  
Their enemies to assail  
In plain field and battail;  
But ye and your host,  
Full of brag and boast,  
And full of waste wind,  
How ye will bears bind,  
And the devil down ding,<sup>1</sup>  
Yet ye dare do nothing  
But leap away like frogs,  
And hide you under logs,  
Like pigs and like hogs,  
And like mangy dogs!  
What an army were ye?  
Or what activity  
Is in you, beggers, brawls,  
Full of scabs and scawls,  
Of vermine and of lice,  
And of all manner vice?

Sir Duke, nay, Sir Duck,  
Sir Drake of the Lake, Sir Duck  
Of the Dunghill, for small luck  
Ye have in feats of war;  
Ye make nought but ye mar;  
Ye are a false intruder,  
And a false abuser,  
And an untrue knight;  
Thou hast too little might  
Against England to fight.

<sup>1</sup>knock down.



Thou art a graceless wight  
To put thyself to flight:  
A vengeance and despight  
On thee must needs alight,  
That durst not bide the sight  
Of my Lord Admiral,  
Of chivalry the well,  
Of knighthood the flower  
In every martial shower,<sup>1</sup>  
The noble Earl of Surrey,  
That put thee in such fray;  
Thou durst no field derain,<sup>2</sup>  
Nor no battle maintain  
Against our strong captain,  
But thou ran home again  
For fear thou should be slain,  
Like a Scottish ketering<sup>3</sup>  
That durst abide no reckoning;  
Thy heart would not serve thee:  
The fiend of hell might sterve<sup>4</sup> thee!

No man hath heard  
Of such a coward,  
And such a mad image  
Carried in a cage,  
As it were a cottage!  
Or of such a mawment<sup>5</sup>  
Carried in a tent.  
In a tent! nay, nay,  
But in a mountain gay,  
Like a great hill  
For a windmill,  
Therein to couch still,  
That no man him kill;  
As it were a goat  
In a sheep-cote,

<sup>1</sup>storm, assault.    <sup>2</sup>contest.    <sup>3</sup>border-raider.    <sup>4</sup>damn.

<sup>5</sup>puppet.

About him a park  
 Of a mad wark,  
 Men call it a toyl.<sup>1</sup>  
 Therein, like a royl,<sup>2</sup>  
 Sir Duncan, ye dared,<sup>3</sup>  
 And thus ye prepared  
 Your carcass to keep  
 Like a silly sheep,  
 A sheep of Cotswold,  
 From rain and from cold,  
 And from raining of raps,  
 And such after claps:  
 Thus in your cowardly castell  
 Ye dect you to dwell!  
 Such a captain of horse,  
 It made no great force<sup>4</sup>  
 If that ye had ta'en  
 Your last deadly bane  
 With a gun-stone,<sup>5</sup>  
 To make you to groan.  
 But hide thee, Sir Topas,  
 Now into the Castle of Bass,  
 And lurk there, like an ass,  
 With some Scottish lass  
 With dugs, dugs, dugs!  
 I shrew thy Scottish lugs,<sup>6</sup>  
 Thy munypins, and thy crag,<sup>7</sup>  
 For thou cannot but brag  
 Like a Scottish hag.  
 Adieu now, Sir Wrig-Wrag,  
 Adieu, Sir Dalyrag!  
 Thy melling is but mocking;  
 Thou may'st give up thy cocking,  
 Give it up, and cry creke,  
 Like an hoddipeke<sup>8</sup>!

<sup>1</sup>snare.<sup>2</sup>wench.<sup>3</sup>lurked [terrified].<sup>4</sup>did not greatly matter.<sup>5</sup>cannon-ball.<sup>6</sup>ears.<sup>7</sup>mouh-pins [teeth] . . . throat.<sup>8</sup>fool.

Whereto should I more speak  
 Of such a farly freke,<sup>1</sup>  
 Of such an horn keke,  
 Of such a bold captain  
 That dare not turn again,  
 Nor durst not crack a word,  
 Nor durst not draw his sword  
 Against the Lion White,<sup>2</sup>  
 But ran away quite?  
 He ran away by night,  
 In the owl flight,  
 Like a coward knight.  
 Adieu, coward, adew,  
 False knight, and most untrue!  
 I render thee, false rebell,  
 To the flinging fiend of hell.

Hark yet, Sir Duke, a word,  
 In earnest or in bawd:  
 What, have ye, villain, forged,  
 And virulently disgorged,  
 As though ye would parbrake,<sup>3</sup>  
 Your avaunts to make,  
 With words enbosed,<sup>4</sup>  
 Ungratiously engrosed,  
 How ye will undertake  
 Our royal king to make  
 His own realm to forsake?  
 Such lewd language ye spake.  
 Sir Duncan, in the devil way,  
 Be well ware what ye say:  
 Ye say that he and ye, —  
 Which he and ye? let see:  
 Ye mean Francis, French king,  
 Should bring about this thing.  
 I say, thou lewd lurdain,<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>strange fellow.<sup>2</sup>Surrey's badge.<sup>3</sup>vomit.<sup>4</sup>swollen words.<sup>5</sup>vile clown.

That neither of you twain  
 So hardy nor so bold  
 His countenance to behold!  
 If our most royal Harry  
 List with you to varry<sup>1</sup>  
 Full soon ye should miscarry,  
 For ye durst not tarry  
 With him to strive a stound<sup>2</sup>;  
 If he on you but frown'd,  
 Not for a thousand pound,  
 Ye durst bide on the ground,  
 Ye would run away round,  
 And cowardly turn your backs,  
 For all your comely cracks,<sup>3</sup>  
 And, for fear par case  
 To look him in the face  
 Ye would defile the place,  
 And run your way apace.  
 Though I trim you this trace  
 With English somewhat base,  
 Yet, *save voster grace*,  
 Thereby I shall purchase  
 No displeasing reward,  
 If ye well can regard  
 Your cankered cowardness  
 And your shameful doubleness.

Are ye not frantic mad,  
 And wretchedly bestad,  
 To rail against his grace  
 That shall bring you full base,  
 And set you in such case  
 That between you twain  
 There shall be drawn a train  
 That shall be to your pain?  
 To fly ye shall be fain,  
 And never turn again.

<sup>1</sup>contend.<sup>2</sup>moment.<sup>3</sup>boasts.

What, would Francis, our friar,  
Be such a false liar,  
So mad a cordelier,<sup>1</sup>  
So mad a murmurer?  
Ye muse somewhat too far,  
All out of joint ye jar:  
God let you never thrive!  
Ween ye, dawcocks, to drive  
Our king out of his ream?  
Ge heme, rank Scot, ge heme,  
With fond Francis, French king:  
Our master shall you bring,  
I trust, to low estate,  
And mate you with check-mate!

Your brains are idle;  
It is time for you to bridle,  
And pipe in a quibble<sup>2</sup>;  
For it is impossible  
For you to bring about  
Our king for to drive out  
Of this his realm royal  
And land imperial;  
So noble a prince as he  
In all activitie  
Of hardy martial actès,  
Fortunate in all his featès.

And now I will me 'dress  
His valiance to express,  
Though insufficient am I  
His grace to magnify  
And laud equivalently.  
Howbeit, loyally,  
After mine allegiance,  
My pen I will advance  
To extol his noble grace,

<sup>1</sup>Franciscan friar.

<sup>2</sup>a silly song (?).

Inspite of thy coward's face,  
 Inspite of King Francis,  
 Devoid of all noblesse,  
 Devoid of good corage,<sup>1</sup>  
 Devoid of wisdom sage,  
 Mad, frantic, and savage;  
 Thus he doth disparage  
 His blood with fond dotage.  
 A prince to play the page  
 It is reckless rage,  
 And a lunatic over-rage.  
 What though my style be rude?  
 With truth it is enewed<sup>2</sup>:  
 Truth ought to be rescued,  
 Truth should not be subdued.

But now will I expound  
 What nobleness doth abound,  
 And what honour is found,  
 And what virtues be resident  
 In our royal regent,  
 Our peerless president,  
 Our king most excellent.

In martial prowess  
 Like unto Hercules;  
 In prudence and wisdom  
 Like unto Solomon;  
 In his goodly person  
 Like unto Absolon;  
 In loyalty and foy<sup>3</sup>  
 Like to Hector of Troy;  
 And his glory to increase,  
 Like to Scipiades<sup>4</sup>;  
 In royal majesty

<sup>1</sup>inclination.<sup>2</sup>brightened.<sup>3</sup>faith.<sup>4</sup>Scipio.

Like unto Ptolemy,  
Like to Duke Josue,  
And the valiant Machube;  
That if I would report  
All the royal sort  
Of his nobility,  
His magnanimity,  
His animosity,<sup>1</sup>  
His frugality,  
His liberality,  
His affability,  
His humanity,  
His stability,  
His humility,  
His benignity,  
His royal dignity,  
My learning is too small  
For to recount them all.

What losells\* then are ye,  
Like cowards as ye be,  
To rail on his estate,  
With words inordinate!  
He rules his commalty  
With all benignity;  
His noble baronage,  
He putteth them in corage  
To exploit deeds of arms,  
To do damage and harms  
Of such as be his foes.  
Wherever he rides or goes  
His subjects he doth support,  
Maintain them with comfort  
Of his most princely port,  
As all men can report.

<sup>1</sup>bravery.<sup>2</sup>knaves.

Then ye be a snappish sort,  
*Et faites à luy grand tort,*  
 With your enboséd<sup>1</sup> jaws  
 To rail on him like daws:  
 The fiend scratch out your maws!

All his subjects and he  
 Most lovingly agree  
 With whole heart and true mind,  
 They find his grace so kind;  
 Wherewith he doth them bind  
 At all hours to be ready  
 With him to live and die,  
 And to spend their hearts'-blood,  
 Their bodies and their good,  
 With him in all distress,  
 Always in readiness  
 To assist his noble grace;  
 In spite of thy coward's face,  
 Most false attainted traitor,  
 And false forsworn faitor.<sup>2</sup>

Avaunt, coward recrayed<sup>3</sup>!  
 Thy pride shall be allayed;  
 With Sir Francis of France  
 We shall pipe you a dance,  
 Shall turn you to mischance!

I rede<sup>4</sup> you, look about;  
 For ye shall be driven out  
 Of your land in short space:  
 We will so follow in the chase  
 That ye shall have no grace  
 For to turn your face;  
 And thus, Saint George to borrow,<sup>5</sup>  
 Ye shall have shame and sorrow.

<sup>1</sup>frothing.<sup>2</sup>dissembler.<sup>3</sup>recreant.<sup>4</sup>advise.<sup>5</sup>St. George being my pledge.



## LENVOY

Go, little quaire, quickly;  
Shew them that shall you read  
How that ye are likely  
Over all the world to spread.  
The false Scots for dread,  
With the Duke of Albany,  
Beside the Water of Tweed  
They fled full cowardly.  
Though your English be rude,  
Barren of eloquence,  
Yet, briefly to conclude,  
Grounded is your sentence  
On truth, under defence  
Of all true Englishmen,  
This matter to credence  
That I write with my pen.

SKELTON LAUREATE, *Obsequious et Loyal.*

*Hereafter followeth a little Book which hath to name*

WHY COME YE NOT TO COURT?

*Compiled by* MAISTER SKELTON, *Poet Laureate*

*The relucient mirror for all Prelates and Presidents, as well  
spiritual as temporal, sadly to look upon,  
devised in English*

All noblemen of this take heed,  
And believe it as your Creed.

Too hasty of sentence,  
Too fierce for none offence,  
Too scarce of your expence,  
Too large in negligence,  
Too slack in recompence,  
Too haut in excellence,  
Too light in intelligence,  
And too light in credence:  
Where these keep residence  
Reason is banished thence,  
And also Dame Prudence,  
With sober Sapience.

All noblemen of this take heed,  
And believe it as your Creed.

Then, without collusion,  
Mark well this conclusion,  
Through such abusion,  
And by such illusion,  
Unto great confusion  
A nobleman may fall,  
And his honour appall;  
And if ye think this shall

Not rub you on the gall  
Then the devil take all!

All noblemen of this take heed,  
And believe it as your Creed.

*Haec vates ille,  
De quo loquantur mille.<sup>1</sup>*

WHY COME YE NOT TO COURT?

For age is a page  
For the court full unmeet,  
For age cannot rage,<sup>2</sup>  
Nor bass<sup>3</sup> her sweet sweet.

But when age seeth that rage  
Doth assuage and refrain,  
Then will age have a corage<sup>4</sup>  
To come to court again.

But  
Helas, sage over-age  
So madly decays  
That age for dotage  
Is reckoned nowadays.

Thus age (a *grand dommage*)  
Is nothing set by,  
And rage in over-age  
Doth run lamentably.

So  
That rage must make pillage  
To catch that catch may,  
And with such forage  
Hunt the boskage,<sup>5</sup>  
That harts will run away!  
Both harts and hinds

<sup>1</sup>That poet of whom a thousand speak.

<sup>2</sup>kiss.

<sup>4</sup>inclination.

<sup>5</sup>woods.  
<sup>3</sup>toy wantonly.

With all good minds:  
Farewell, then, have good-day!

Then, have good-day, adew!  
For default of rescue  
Some men may haply rue,  
And some their heads mew;  
The time doth fast ensue  
That bales<sup>1</sup> begin to brew.  
I drede, by sweet Jesu,  
This tale will be too true –  
“In faith, deacon, thou crew,  
In faith, deacon, thou crew!”

“Deacon, thou crew!” doubtless!  
For, truly to express,  
There hath been much excess,  
With banqueting brainless,  
With rioting reckeless,  
With gambolling thriftless,  
With spend and waste witless,  
Treating of truce restless,  
Prating of peace peaceless.  
The counterung at Calais<sup>2</sup>  
Wrung us on the males<sup>3</sup>:  
Chief Counsellor was careless,  
Groaning, grudging, graceless;  
And, to none intent,  
Our tallwood all is brent,<sup>4</sup>  
Our faggots are all spent.  
We may blow at the coal!  
Our mare hath lost her foal,  
And “Mock hath lost her shoe:

<sup>1</sup>troubles.

<sup>2</sup>Probably refers to Wolsey's expedition to Calais, July–November, 1521, as mediator between Francis and Charles. It has been formerly supposed that this passage referred to the Field of the Cloth of Gold (1520). It may refer to both expeditions.

<sup>3</sup>purses. Probably – Cost us something. <sup>4</sup>fire-wood . . . burnt.

What may she do thereto?"  
 An end of an old song.  
 Do right and do no wrong!  
 As right as a ram's horn!  
 For thrift is thread-bare worn,  
 Our sheep our shrewdly shorn,  
 And truth is all to-torn;  
 Wisdom is laughed to scorn,  
 Favell<sup>1</sup> is false forsworn,  
 Javell<sup>2</sup> is nobly born,  
 Havell and Harvy Hafter,<sup>3</sup>  
 Jack Travell and Cole Crafter –  
 We shall hear more hereafter.  
 With polling and shaving,  
 With borrowing and craving,  
 With reaving and raving,  
 With swearing and staring,  
 There 'vaileth no reasoning,  
 For Will doth rule all thing,  
 Will, Will, Will, Will!  
 He ruleth alway still.  
 Good reason and good skill,  
 They may be garlic pill,<sup>4</sup>  
 Carry sacks to the mill,  
 Or peascods they may shill,<sup>5</sup>  
 Or else go roast a stone!  
 There is no man but one<sup>6</sup>  
 That hath the strokes alone:  
 Be it black or white,  
 All that he doth is right –  
 As right as a camock crooked.<sup>7</sup>  
 This bill well over-lookéd,  
 Clearly preceive we may  
 There went the hare away,  
 The hare, the fox, the gray,<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Flattery. <sup>2</sup>Low knave. <sup>3</sup>See this character in *Bouge of Court*.

<sup>4</sup>peel. <sup>5</sup>shell. <sup>6</sup>i.e. Wolsey. <sup>7</sup>a crooked branch. <sup>8</sup>badger.

The hart, the hind, the buck<sup>1</sup>:  
 God send us better luck,  
 God send us better luck!

Twit, Andrew, twit, Scot,  
 Ge hame, ge scour the pot:  
 For we have spent our shot.  
 We shall have a *tot quot*<sup>2</sup>  
 From the Pope of Rome,  
 To weave all in one lome  
 A web of linsey-woolsey,  
*Opus male dulce*:  
 The devil kiss his cule<sup>3</sup>!  
 For, whiles he doth rule  
 All is warse and warse,  
 The devil kiss his arse!  
 For whether he bless or curse  
 It cannot be much worse.  
 From Bamborough to Botham Bar  
 We have cast up our war,  
 And made worthy truce  
 With "Gup, levell suse!"  
 Our money madly lent,  
 And more madly spent:  
 From Croydon to Kent  
 Wot ye whither they went?  
 From Winchelsea to Rye,  
 And all not worth a fly!  
 From Wentbridge to Hull  
 Our army waxeth dull,  
 With "Turn all home again!"  
 And never a Scot slain.  
 Yet the good Earl of Surrey<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A reference, probably, to the Duke of Buckingham, who was believed to have been impeached and brought to the block by Wolsey in 1521.

<sup>2</sup>a dispensation.

<sup>3</sup>tail.

<sup>4</sup>Surrey's expedition, July, 1522.

The Frenchmen he doth fray,  
 And vexeth them day by day  
 With all the power he may;  
 The Frenchmen he hath fainted,  
 And made their hearts attainted:  
 Of chivalry he is the floure,  
 Our Lord be his succour!  
 The Frenchmen he hath so mated<sup>1</sup>  
 And their courage abated  
 That they are but half men:  
 Like foxes in their den,  
 Like cankered cowards all,  
 Like urchins<sup>2</sup> in a stone wall,  
 They keep them in their holds,  
 Like hen-hearted cuckolds.

But yet they over-shoot us  
 With crowns and with scutus<sup>3</sup>;  
 With scutes and crowns of gold  
 I drede we are bought and sold:  
 It is a wondrous wark!  
 They shoot all at one mark, —  
 At the Cardinal's hat,  
 They shoot all at that.  
 Out of their strong towns  
 They shoot at him with crowns:  
 With crowns of gold emblazed  
 They make him so amazed  
 And his eyen so dazed  
 That he ne see can  
 To know God nor man!  
 He is set so high  
 In his hierarchy  
 Of frantic frenezy  
 And foolish fantasy,

<sup>1</sup>confounded, check-mated.<sup>2</sup>hedge-hogs.<sup>3</sup>scut, coin worth about 3s.

That in the Chamber of Stars<sup>1</sup>  
 All matters there he mars:  
 Clapping his rod on the board,  
 No man dare speak a word,  
 For he hath all the saying  
 Without any renaying.<sup>2</sup>  
 He rolleth in his records,  
 He saith "How say ye, my lords?  
 Is not my reason good?"  
 (Good even, good Robin Hood!<sup>3</sup>)  
 Some say "Yes!" and some  
 Sit still as they were dumb!  
 Thus thwarting over thum  
 He ruleth all the roast  
 With bragging and with boast.  
 Borne up on every side  
 With pomp and with pride,  
 With "Trump up, Alleluia!"  
 For Dame Philargeria<sup>4</sup>  
 Hath so his heart in hold  
 He loveth nothing but gold;  
 And Asmodeus of hell  
 Maketh his members swell  
 With Dalida<sup>5</sup> to mell,  
 That wanton damosell.  
 Adew, Philosophia!  
 Adew, Theologia!  
 Welcome, Dame Simonia,<sup>6</sup>  
 With Dame Castrimargia,<sup>7</sup>  
 To drink and for to eat  
 Sweet hippocras and sweet meat!  
 To keep his flesh chaste,  
 In Lent, for a repaste  
 He eateth capons stewéd,

<sup>1</sup>Star-Chamber.<sup>2</sup>contradicting.<sup>3</sup>A proverbial expression for civility extorted by fear.<sup>4</sup>Cupidity.<sup>5</sup>Delilah.<sup>6</sup>Simony.<sup>7</sup>gluttony.



Pheasant and partridge mewéd,  
 Hens, chickens, and pigs:  
 He froynes and he frigs,  
 Spareth neither maid nor wife:  
 This is a 'postle's life!

Helas! my heart is sorry  
 To tell of vain glory!  
 But now upon this story  
 I will no further rime  
 Till another time,  
 Till another time.

*What newës, what newës?*  
 Small newës that true is,  
 That be worth two cuës.<sup>1</sup>  
 But at the naked stewës,<sup>2</sup>  
 I understand how that  
*The Sign of the Cardinal's Hat,*<sup>3</sup>  
 That inn is now shut up,  
 With "Gup, whore, gup, now, gup!  
 Gup Guilliam Travillian!"  
 With "Jaist you, I say, Julian!  
 Will ye bear no coals?"<sup>4</sup>  
 A meiny<sup>5</sup> of mare-foals,  
 That occupy<sup>6</sup> their holes,  
 Full of pocky moles.<sup>7</sup>

*What hear ye of Lancashire?*  
 They were not paid their hire;  
 They are fell as any fire.

*What hear ye of Cheshire?*  
 They have laid all in the mire;

<sup>1</sup>cue was half a farthing.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. brothels.

<sup>3</sup>A Southwark brothel mentioned in Stow's *Survey*.

<sup>4</sup>Will ye not brook this insult? (being driven out).

<sup>5</sup>A set.

<sup>6</sup>i.e. use (a reference to their profession).

<sup>7</sup>marks of the pox.

They grudgéd, and said  
 Their wages were not paid;  
 Some said they were afraid  
 Of the Scottish host, —  
 For all their crake and boast,  
 Wild fire and thunder,  
 For all this worldly wonder,  
 A hundred mile assunder  
 They were when they were next<sup>1</sup> —  
 That is the true text.

*What hear ye of the Scots?*  
 They make us all sots,  
 Popping foolish daws<sup>2</sup>!  
 They make us to peel straws!  
 They play their old pranks,  
 After Huntly-banks:  
 At the stream of Bannockburn  
 They did us a shrewd turn,  
 When Edward of Carnarvon  
 Lost all that his father won.

*What hear ye of the Lord Dacres?*  
 He maketh us Jack Rakers!  
 He says we are but crakers!  
 He calleth us England men  
 Strong-hearted like an hen!  
 For the Scots and he  
 Too well they do agree,  
 With "Do thou for me,  
 And I shall do for thee!"  
 Whiles the Red Hat doth endure  
 He maketh himself cocksure;  
 The Red Hat with his lure  
 Bringeth all things under cure.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>nearest.<sup>2</sup>i.e. Jibbering idiots.<sup>3</sup>The Warden of the West Marches.<sup>4</sup>care.

*But, as the world now goes,  
 What hear ye of the Lord Rose?<sup>1</sup>  
 Nothing to purpose,  
 Not worth a cockly fose:  
 Their hearts be in their hose!  
 The Earl of Northumberland  
 Dare take nothing on hand!  
 Our barons be so bold  
 In a mousehold they wold<sup>2</sup>  
 Run away and creep!  
 Like a meiny of sheep,  
 Dare not look out at dur  
 For dread of the mastif cur,<sup>3</sup>  
 For dread of the butcher's dog  
 Would worry them like an hog!*

*For, an this cur do gnar,<sup>4</sup>  
 They must stand all afar,  
 To hold up their hand at the Bar.  
 For all their noble blood  
 He plucks them by the hood,  
 And shakes them by the ear,  
 And brings them in such fear!  
 He baiteth them like a bear,  
 Like an ox or a bull.  
 Their wits, he saith, are dull;  
 He saith they have no brain  
 Their estate<sup>5</sup> to maintain;  
 And maketh them to bow their knee  
 Before his majestie.  
 Judges of the king's laws,  
 He counts them fools and daws;  
 Sargeants of the Coif eke,  
 He saith they are to seek  
 In pleading of their case.*

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Lord Roos, Warden of the East Marches.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. Wolsey; so in next line.

<sup>4</sup>snarl.

<sup>2</sup>would.  
<sup>5</sup>position.

At the Common Place,<sup>1</sup>  
 Or at the King's Bench,  
 He wringeth them such a wrench  
 That all our learned men  
 Dare not set their pen  
 To plead a true triall  
 Within Westminster Hall.  
 In the Chancery, where he sits,  
 But such as he admits,  
 None so hardy to speak!  
 He sayth, "Thou hoddipeke,<sup>2</sup>  
 Thy learning is too lewd,<sup>3</sup>  
 Thy tongue is not well-thewd<sup>4</sup>  
 To seek before our Grace!"  
 And openly, in that place,  
 He rages and he raves,  
 And calls them "cankered knaves"!  
 Thus royally he doth deal  
 Under the king's broad seal;  
 And in the 'Chequer he them checks!  
 In the Star Chamber he nods and becks,  
 And beareth him there so stout  
 That no man dare rowt<sup>5</sup>!  
 Duke, earl, baron, nor lord,  
 But to his sentence must accord;  
 Whether he be knight or squire,  
 All men must follow his desire.

*What say ye of the Scottish king?*  
 That is another thing.  
 He is but a youngling,  
 A stalworthy stripling!  
 There is a whisp'ring and a whipling  
 He should be hither brought;  
 But, an it were well sought,

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Pleas.<sup>2</sup>blockhead.<sup>3</sup>too mean.<sup>4</sup>well-mannered.<sup>5</sup>belch.

I trow all will be nought!  
 Not worth a shuttle-cock,  
 Not worth a sour calstock<sup>1</sup>!  
 There goeth many a lie  
 Of the Duke of Albany,  
 That off should go his head,  
 And brought in quick or dead,  
 And all Scotland ours  
 The mounenance of two hours.  
 But, as some men sayn,  
 I dread of some false train  
 Subtily wrought shall be  
 Under a feigned treatie.  
 But, within months three,  
 Men may haply see  
 The treachery and the pranks  
 Of the Scottish banks!

*What hear ye of Burgonions,<sup>2</sup>  
 And the Spaniard's onions?*  
 They have slain our Englishmen,  
 Above threescore and ten:  
 For all your amitie  
 No better they agree!

God save my Lord Admiral!

*What hear ye of Mutrell<sup>3</sup>?*  
 Therewith I dare not mell!

*Yet what hear ye tell  
 Of our Grand Council?*  
 I could say somewhat . . .  
 But speak ye no more of that,

<sup>1</sup>cabbage-stalk.

<sup>2</sup>Burgundians.

<sup>3</sup>Montreuil. Refers to the suspicion during the autumn of 1522 that a French fleet was gathering there to invade England.

For drede of the Red Hat  
 Take pepper in the nose,<sup>1</sup> —  
 For then thine head off goes,  
 Off by the hard arse!  
 But there is some travarse<sup>2</sup>  
 Between some and some  
 That maketh our sire to glum.  
 It is somewhat wrong  
 That his beard is so long!  
 He mourneth in black clothing.  
 I pray God save the king!  
 Wherever he go or ride  
 I pray God be his guide!  
 Thus will I conclude my style,  
 And fall to rest a while,  
 And so to rest a while.

*Once yet again  
 Of you I would frair,<sup>3</sup>  
 Why come ye not to court?  
 To which court?  
 To the king's court,  
 Or to Hampton Court?  
 Nay, to the king's court!  
 The king's court  
 Should have the excellence,  
 But Hampton Court  
 Hath the preëminence,  
 And York's Place,<sup>4</sup>  
 With my Lord's Grace!  
 To whose magnificence  
 Is all the confluence,  
 Suits and supplications,*

<sup>1</sup>For fear that the Cardinal take offence.

<sup>2</sup>conference.

<sup>3</sup>inquire.

<sup>4</sup>Wolsey's palace as Archbishop of York in Whitehall. After his disgrace it became a royal residence, together with Hampton Court, which, at an earlier date, he himself gave to the king.

Embassades of all nations.  
 Straw for Law Canon,  
 Or for the Law Common,  
 Or for the Law Civil!  
 It shall be as he will:  
 Stop at Law Tancrete,  
 An abstract or a concrete,  
 Be it sour, be it sweet,  
 His wisdom is so discreet  
 That, in a fume or an heat,  
 "Warden of the Fleet,  
 Set him fast by the feet!"  
 And of his royal power,  
 When him list to lower,  
 Then, "Have him to the Tower,  
*Sans aulter* remedy!  
 Have him forth, by and by,  
 To the Marshalsea,  
 Or to the King's Bench!"  
 He diggeth so in the trench  
 • Of the Court Royall  
 That he ruleth them all!  
 So he doth undermin<sup>1</sup>,  
 And such sleights doth find,  
 That the king's mind  
 By him is subverted,  
 And so straitly coercted  
 In credencing his tales  
 That all is but nut-shales  
 That any other saith —  
 He hath in him such faith.

Now, yet all this might be  
 Suffered and taken in gre<sup>2</sup>  
 If that that he wrought  
 To any good end were brought: •

<sup>1</sup>undermine.

<sup>2</sup>taken kindly. •

But all he bringeth to nought,  
 By God, that me dear bought!  
 He beareth the king on hand<sup>1</sup>  
 That he must poll his land  
 To make his coffers rich;  
 But he layeth all in the ditch,  
 And useth such abusion  
 That in the conclusion  
 All cometh to confusion.

*Perceive ye the cause why?*  
 To tell the truth plainly,  
 He is so ambitious,  
 So shameless, and so vicious,  
 And so superstitious,  
 And so much oblivious  
 From whence that he came  
 That he falleth in a *caeciam*, —  
 Which, truly to express,  
 Is a forgetfulness,  
 Or wilful blindness,  
 Wherewith the Sodomites  
 Lost their inward sights:  
 The Gomorrhians also  
 Were brought to deadly woe,  
 As Scripture recordis:  
*A caecitate cordis,*<sup>2</sup>  
 (In the Latin sing we)  
*Libera nos, Domine!*

But this mad Amaleck,  
 Like to a Mamelek,<sup>3</sup>  
 He regardeth lords  
 No more than potshords<sup>4</sup>!  
 He is in such elation

<sup>1</sup>persuades the king.

<sup>2</sup>From blindness of heart,  
 Deliver us, O Lord!

<sup>3</sup>Mameluke.

<sup>4</sup>potsherds.



Of his exaltation,  
And the supportation  
Of our Sovereign Lord,  
That, God to record,  
He ruleth all at will  
Without reason or skill!  
Howbeit, the primordial  
Of his wretched original,  
And his base progeny,  
And his greasy genealogy,  
He came of the sang royall  
That was cast out of a butcher's stall!

But however he was born,  
Men would have the less scorn  
If he could consider  
His birth and room<sup>1</sup> togider,  
And call to his mind  
How noble and how kind  
To him he hath found  
• Our Sovereign Lord, chief ground  
Of all this prelacy,  
That set him nobly  
In great authority  
Out from a low degree,  
Which he cannot see:  
For he was, pardé,  
No doctor of divinity,  
Nor doctor of the law,  
Nor of none other saw:  
But a poor maister of art!  
God wot, had little part  
Of the quatrivials,  
Nor yet of trivials,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>place, office.

<sup>2</sup>The two school courses of the time: (1) higher, (2) lower. i.e.  
(1) astrology, astronomy, geometry, arithmetic, music; (2) grammar,  
rhetoric, logic. (See p. 265.)

Nor of philosophy,  
Nor of philology,  
Nor of good policy,  
Nor of astronomy, —  
Nor acquainted worth a fly  
With honourable Haly,  
Nor with royal Ptolemy,  
Nor with Albumazar,  
To treat of any star  
Fixed or else mobil.  
His Latin tongue doth hobbil,  
He doth but clout and cobbil  
In Tully's faculty  
Calléd humanity!  
Yet proudly he dare pretend  
How no man can him amend.  
But have ye not heard this, —  
How a one-eyed man is  
Well-sighted when  
He is among blind men?

Then, our process for to stable,  
This man was full unable  
To reach to such degree  
Had not our Prince be  
Royal Henry the Eight,  
Taken him in such conceit  
That he set him on height,  
In exemplifying  
Great Alexander the king.  
In writing as we find  
Which (of his royal mind,  
And of his noble pleasure,  
Transcending out of measure)  
Thought to do a thing  
That pertaineth to a king —  
To take up one of nought,  
And made to him be brought

A wretched poor man,  
Which his living wan  
With planting of leeks  
By the days and by the weeks;  
And of this poor vassal  
He made a king royal;  
And gave him a realm to rule  
That occupied a shule,<sup>1</sup>  
A mattock, and a spade,  
Before that he was made  
A king, as I have told,  
And ruled as he wold.  
Such is a king's power, —  
To make within an hour,  
And work such a miracle  
That shall be a spectacle  
Of renown and worldly fame.  
In likewise now the same  
Cardinal is promoted,  
Yet with lewd conditions coated,  
As hereafter be noted, —  
Presumption and vain glory,  
Envy, wrath, and lechery,  
Covetise and gluttony,  
Slothful to do good,  
Now frantic, now stark wood<sup>2</sup>!

Should this man, of such mood,  
Rule the sword of might?  
How can he do right?  
For he will as soon smite  
His friend as his foe!  
A proverb long ago:  
Set up a wretch on high  
In a throne triumphantly,  
Make him a great estate,

<sup>1</sup>used a shovel.

<sup>2</sup>mad.

## MAJOR SATIRES

And he will play check-mate  
 With royal majesty,  
 Count himself as good as he!  
 A prelate potential  
 To rule under Belial,  
 As fierce and as cruel  
 As the Fiend of hell!  
 His servants meniall  
 He doth revile and brall  
 Like Mahound<sup>1</sup> in a play.  
 No man dare him withsay:  
 He hath despight and scorn  
 At them that be well-born;  
 He rebukes them and rails  
 "Ye whoresons! Ye vassails!  
 Ye knaves! Ye churls' sonnés!  
 Ye ribalds, not worth two plummés!  
 Ye rain-beaten beggers rejagged!"  
 With "Stoop, thou havell!  
 Run, thou javell!  
 Thou peevish pie pecked!  
 Thou losell long-necked!"  
 Thus, daily, they be decked,  
 Taunted and checked,  
 That they are so woe,  
 They wot not whither to go!

No man dare come to the speech  
 Of this gentle Jack-breech,  
 Of what estate he be  
 Of spiritual dignitie;  
 Nor duke of high degree,  
 Nor marquis, earl nor lord:  
 Which shrewdly doth accord!  
 Thus he, born so base,  
 All noblemen should out-face,

<sup>1</sup>Mahomet.

His countenance like a kayser.  
 "My Lord is not at leisure!  
 Sir, ye must tarry a stound,<sup>1</sup>  
 Till better leisure be found!  
 And, sir, ye must dance attendance,  
 And take patient sufferance,  
 For my Lord's Grace  
 Hath now no time nor space  
 To speak with you as yet!"  
 And thus they shall sit.  
 Chose them sit or flit,  
 Stand, walk, or ride,  
 And at his leisure abide,  
 Perchance, half a year,  
 And yet never the near<sup>2</sup>!

This dangerous dousipeer,<sup>3</sup>  
 Like a king's peer!  
 And within this xvi. year  
 He would have been right fain  
 To have been a chaplain,  
 And have taken right great pain  
 With a poor knight,  
 Whatsoever he hight.<sup>4</sup>  
 The chief of his own counsel,  
 They cannot well tell  
 When they with him should mell,  
 He is so fierce and fell!  
 He rails and he rates,  
 He calleth them "doddipates<sup>5</sup>";

<sup>1</sup>a moment.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. nearer.

<sup>3</sup>noble — actually, one of the *douze-pairs*, the twelve equals, or peers, of Charlemagne.

<sup>4</sup>Sir Richard Nanfan, Deputy of Calais, whose chaplain Wolsey was, and who promised him his position as chaplain to King Henry VII.

<sup>5</sup>blockheads.

He grins and he gapes,  
 As it were jackanapes!  
 Such a mad bedleme<sup>1</sup>  
 For to rule this reame,  
 It is a wondrous case!  
 That the King's Grace  
 Is toward him so minded  
 And so far blinded  
 That he cannot perceive  
 How he doth him deceive!  
 I doubt lest by sorcery,  
 Or such other loselry,<sup>2</sup>  
 As witch-craft, or charming,  
 For he is the king's darling,  
 And his sweet heart-root!  
 And is governed by this mad coot!  
 For what is a man the better  
 For the king's letter?  
 For he will tear it assunder<sup>3</sup>!  
 Whereat much I wonder  
 How such a hoddipole  
 So boldly dare control,  
 And so malapertly withstand  
 The king's own hand,  
 And set not by it a mite!  
 He saith the king doth write  
 And writeth he wotteth not what!  
 And yet, for all that,  
 The king his clemency  
 Dispenseth with his demensy.<sup>4</sup>

But what His Grace doth think  
 I have no pen nor ink  
 That therewith can mell;  
 But well I can tell

<sup>1</sup>bedlamite.<sup>2</sup>villany.<sup>3</sup>i.e. he will even tear up the king's letters.<sup>4</sup>madness.

How Francis Petrarch,  
 That much noble clerk,  
 Writeth how Charlemagne  
 Could not himself refrain,  
 But was ravished with a rage  
 Of a like dotage.  
 But how that came about  
 Read ye the story out,  
 And ye shall find surely  
 It was by necromancy,  
 By carects<sup>1</sup> and conjuration  
 Under a certain constellation,  
 And a certain fumigation  
 Under a stone on a gold ring,  
 Wrought to Charlemagne the king;  
 Which constrained him forcibly  
 For to love a certain body  
 Above all other inordinately.  
 This is no fable nor no lie:  
 At Acon<sup>2</sup> it was brought to pass,  
 As by mine author tried it was.<sup>3</sup>  
 But let my masters mathematical  
 Tell you the rest! For me, they shall;  
 They have the full intelligence,  
 And dare use the experience,  
 In their absolute conscience  
 To practise such obsolete science:  
 For I abhor to smatter  
 Of one so devilish a matter.

But I will make further relation  
 Of this isagogical collation,<sup>4</sup>  
 How Maister Gaguin, the chronicler  
 Of the feats of war  
 That were done in France,

<sup>1</sup>magical characters.

<sup>2</sup>Aix la Chapelle.

<sup>3</sup>See Petrarch, *Fam. Epist.*, lib. i. Ep. iii.

<sup>4</sup>i.e. comparison introduced.

Maketh remembrance  
 How King Lewis, of late,  
 Made up a great estate<sup>1</sup>  
 Of a poor wretched man,  
 Whereof much care began.  
 Johannes Balua was his name,  
 Mine author writeth the same.  
 Promoted was he  
 To a cardinal's dignitie,  
 By Lewis the king aforesaid,  
 With him so well apayed<sup>2</sup>  
 That he made him his chancellor  
 To make all or to mar,  
 And to rule as him list,  
 Till he checked at the fist,<sup>3</sup>  
 And, against all reason,  
 Committed open treason  
 Against his lord sovereign:  
 Wherefore he suffered pain,  
 Was 'headed, drawen, and quartered,  
 And died stinkingly martyred.<sup>4</sup>  
 Lo, yet for all that  
 He wore a cardinal's hat,  
 In him was small faith,  
 As mine author saith –  
 Not for that I mean  
 Such a casualty should be seen,  
 Or such chance should fall  
 Unto our cardinal!

Almighty God, I trust,  
 Hath for him discust<sup>5</sup>  
 That of force he must  
 Be faithful, true, and just

<sup>1</sup>a person of great estate.

<sup>2</sup>satisfied.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. turned on the hand that fed him.

<sup>4</sup>This is incorrect. Cardinal Balua was confined by order of Louis XI in an iron cage at the Castle of Loches for eleven years. The rest of his life he spent prosperously in Italy.

<sup>5</sup>determined.



To our most royal king,  
 Chief root of his making.  
 Yet it is a wily mouse  
 That can build his dwelling house  
 Within the cat's ear,  
 Withouten dread or fear!  
 It is a nice reckoning  
 To put all the governing,  
 All the rule of this land  
 Into one man's hand!  
 One wise man's head  
 May stand somewhat in stead:  
 But the wits of many wise  
 Much better can devise,  
 By their circumspection,  
 And their sad<sup>1</sup> direction,  
 To cause the common weal  
 Long to endure in heal.  
 Christ keep King Henry the Eighth  
 From treachery and deceit,  
 And grant him grace to know  
 The falcon from the crow,  
 The wolf from the lamb,  
 From whence that mastiff cam!  
 Let him never confound  
 The gentle greyhound!  
 Of this matter the ground  
 Is easy to expound,  
 And soon may be perceivéd,  
 How the world is conveyéd.

*But hark, my friend, one word  
 In earnest or in bord<sup>2</sup>!  
 Tell me now, in this stead,  
 Is Maister Meautis dead,  
 The king's French secretary,  
 And his untrue adversary?*

<sup>1</sup>grave.

<sup>2</sup>jest.

*For he sent in writing  
To Francis, the French king,  
Of our maister's counsel in everything.  
That was a perilous reckoning!*

Nay, nay, he is not dead,  
But he was so pained in the head  
That he shall never eat more bread!  
Now he is gone to another stead  
With a bull under lead,<sup>1</sup>  
By way of commission,  
To a strange jurisdiction  
Called Dimingis Dale,  
Far beyond Portingale,  
And hath his passport to pass  
*Ultra Sauromatas*,  
To the devil, Sir Sathanas,  
To Pluto, and Sir Belial,  
The Devil's vicar general,  
And to his college conventual,  
As well calodemional,<sup>2</sup>  
As to cacodemional,<sup>3</sup>  
To purvey<sup>4</sup> for our cardinal  
A palace pontifical,  
To keep his court provincial,  
Upon articles judicial,  
To contend and to strive  
For his prerogative,  
Within that consistory  
To make summons peremptory  
Before some prothonotory  
Imperial or papal.

Upon this matter mystical  
I have told you part, but not all.  
Hereafter perchance I shall  
Make a larger memorial.

<sup>1</sup>i.e. a seal.

<sup>2</sup>consisting of good angels.

<sup>3</sup>consisting of bad angels.

<sup>4</sup>provide.

And a further rehearsal,  
 And more paper I think to blot,  
 To the court why I came not:  
 Desiring you above all thing  
 To keep you from laughing  
 When ye fall to reading  
 Of this wanton scroll:  
 And pray for Meautis' soul,  
 For he is well past and gone!  
 That, would God, every one  
 Of his affinitie  
 Were gone as well as he!  
 Amen, amen, say ye,  
 Of your inward charitie;  
     Amen,  
 Of your inward charitie!

It were great ruth,<sup>1</sup>  
 For writing of truth,  
 Any man should be  
 In perplexitie  
 Of displeasure:  
 For I make you sure,  
 Where truth is abhored  
 It is a plain record  
 That there wants grace;  
 In whose place  
 Doth occupy,  
 Full ungraciously,  
 False Flattery,  
 False Treachery,  
 False Bribery,  
 Subtle Sim Sly,  
 With mad Folly;  
 For who can best lie  
 He is best set by.

Then farewell to thee,  
 Wealthful Felicitie!  
 For Prosperitie  
 Away then will flee!  
 Then must we agree  
 With Povertie;  
 For Misery  
 With Penury  
 Miserably  
 And wretchedly  
 Hath made ascry  
 And outcry,  
 Following the chase  
 To drive away Grace.  
 Yet sayest thou perchance,<sup>1</sup>  
 We can lack no grace!  
 For my lord's grace,  
 And my lady's grace,  
 With trey, deuce, ace,  
 And ace in the face,  
 Some haut and some base,<sup>2</sup>  
 Some dance the trace<sup>3</sup>  
 Ever in one case:  
 Mark me that chase<sup>4</sup>  
 In the tennis play,  
 For sink quater trey  
 Is a tall man:  
 He rode, but we ran!  
 Hay, the gye and the gan<sup>5</sup>!  
 The gray goose is no swan!  
 The waters wax wan,  
 And beggars they ban,  
 And they cursed Datan,

<sup>1</sup>perchance.<sup>2</sup>high . . . low.<sup>3</sup>path, track.<sup>4</sup>i.e. Mark well that point.<sup>5</sup>the goose and the gander — a play on the words, referring to the dance *heydegmies*.

*De tribu Dan,*  
 That this work began,  
*Palam et clam,*  
 With Balak and Balam,  
 The golden ram  
 Of Fleming dam,  
 Shem, Japhet, or Ham.

But how come to pass  
 Your cupboard that was  
 Is turned to glass?  
 From silver to brass,  
 From gold to pewter?  
 Or else to a neuter,  
 To copper, to tin,  
 To lead, or alcumyn?  
 A goldsmith your mayor<sup>1</sup>;  
 But the chief of your fair  
 Might stand now by potters,  
 And such as sell trotters,  
 Pitchers, potshords!  
 This shrewdly accords  
 To be a cupboard for lords!

My lord now, and sir knight,  
 Good-even and good-night!  
 For now, Sir Tristram<sup>2</sup>  
 You must wear buckram,  
 Or canvas of Caen,  
 For silks are wane.<sup>3</sup>  
 Our royals<sup>4</sup> that shone,  
 Our nobles<sup>4</sup> are gone

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Sir John Mundy, a member of the Goldsmiths' Company, who became Lord Mayor of London on October 28<sup>th</sup> (the old Lord Mayor's Day), 1522.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. any knight

<sup>3</sup>decreased.

<sup>4</sup>The coins so called.

Among the Burgonions,<sup>1</sup>  
 And Spaniards' onions,  
 And the Flanderkins.  
 Jill sweats, and Kate spins,  
 They are happy that wins;  
 But England may well say,  
 "Fie on this winning alway!  
 Now nothing but pay, pay!"  
 With, "Laugh and lay down,"<sup>2</sup>  
 Borough, city, and town.

Good Spring of Langham  
 Must count what became  
 Of his cloth-making:  
 He is at such taking,  
 Though his purse wax dull  
 He must tax for his wull<sup>3</sup>  
 By nature of a new writ.  
 My Lord's Grace nameth it  
*A quia non satisfacit:*  
 In the spight of his teeth  
 He must pay again  
 A thousand or twain  
 Of his gold in store;  
 And yet he paid before  
 An hundred pound and more,  
 Which pincheth him sore.  
 My Lord's Grace will bring  
 Down this high spring,  
 And bring it so low  
 It shall not ever flow!

Such a prelate, I trow,  
 Were worthy to row  
 Through the straits of Marock<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Burgundians.

<sup>2</sup>A punning allusion to the game of cards so called.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. pay tax for his wool.

<sup>4</sup>Morocco.

To the jibbet of Baldock!  
 He would dry up the streams  
 Of ix. kings' reams,  
 All rivers and wells,  
 All waters that swells!  
 For with us he so mells,  
 That within England dwells,  
 I would he were somewhere else:  
 For else by and by  
 He will drink us so dry,  
 And suck us so nigh,  
 That men shall scantly  
 Have penny or halfpenny.  
 God save his noble Grace,  
 And grant him a place  
 Endless to dwell  
 With the Devil of hell!  
 For, an he were there,  
 We need never fear  
 Of the fiends blake<sup>1</sup>:  
 For I undertake  
 He would so brag and crake  
 That he would then make  
 The devils to quake,  
 To shudder and to shake,  
 Like a fire-drake,<sup>2</sup>  
 And with a coal-rake  
 Bruise them on the brake,<sup>3</sup>  
 And bind them to a stake,  
 And set all hell on fire  
 At his own desire.  
 He is such a grim sire,  
 He is such a potestolate,<sup>4</sup>  
 And such a potestate,<sup>5</sup>  
 That he would break the brains

<sup>1</sup>black.

<sup>2</sup>dragon.

<sup>3</sup>An engine of torture.

<sup>4</sup>legate.

<sup>5</sup>chief magistrate.

Of Lucifer in his chains,  
 And rule them each one  
 In Lucifer's throne.  
 I would he were gone:  
 For among us is none  
 That ruleth but he alone,  
 Without all good reason,  
 And all out of season:  
 For Fulham peason<sup>1</sup>  
 With him be not geson\*!  
 They grow very rank  
 Upon every bank  
 Of his herbers green,  
 With my lady bright and sheen.  
 On their game it is seen  
 They play not all clean,  
 An it be as I ween.

But as touching discretion,  
 With sober direction,  
 He keepeth them in subjection.  
 They can have no protection  
 To rule nor to guide;  
 But all must be tried,  
 And abide the correction  
 Of his wilful affection.  
 For as for wit,  
 The Devil speed wit!  
 But brainsick and brainless,  
 Witless and reckless,  
 Careless and shameless,  
 Thriftless and graceless,  
 Together are bended,<sup>3</sup>  
 And so condescended,<sup>4</sup>  
 That the commonwealth  
 Shall never have good health:

<sup>1</sup>pease.<sup>2</sup>rare.<sup>3</sup>banded.<sup>4</sup>agreed.



But tattered and tuggéd,  
 Ragged and ruggéd,  
 Shaven and shorn,  
 And all thread-bare worn.  
 Such greediness,  
 Such neediness,  
 Miserableness,  
 With wretchedness,  
 Hath brought in distress  
 And much heaviness  
 And great dolour  
 England, the floure  
 Of relucēt honour,  
 In old commemoration  
 Most royal English nation.  
 Now all is out of fashion,  
 Almost in desolation.  
 I speak by protestation:  
 God of his miseration  
 Send better reformation!

Lo, for to do shamefully  
 He judgeth it no folly!  
 But to write of his shame  
 He saith we are to blame.  
 What a frenzy is this –  
 No shame to do amiss,  
 And yet he is ashamed  
 To be shamefully named!  
 And oft preachers be blamed  
 Because they have proclaimed  
 His madness by writing,  
 His simpleness reciting,  
 Remording and biting,  
 With chiding and with fighting,<sup>1</sup>  
 Shewing him God's laws:

<sup>1</sup>scolding.

He calleth the preachers daws!  
And of holy scripture's saws  
He counteth them for gee-gaws,  
And putteth them to silence  
With words of violence,  
Like Pharaoh, void of grace,  
Did Moses sore menace,  
And Aaron sore he threat,  
The word of God to let<sup>1</sup>:  
This mawmet in like wise  
Against the Church doth rise.  
The preacher he doth dispise,  
With craking in such wise,  
So bragging all with boast,  
That no preacher almost  
Dare speak for his life  
Of my Lord's Grace, nor his wife!  
For he hath such a bull  
He may take whom he wull,  
And as many as him likes;  
May eat pigs in Lent for pikes,  
After the sects of heretics!  
For in Lent he will eat  
All manner of flesh meat  
That he can anywhere gete;  
With other abusions great,  
Whereof for to treat  
It would make the Devil to sweat!  
For all privileged places  
He breaks and defaces!  
All places of religion  
He hath them in derision!  
And maketh such provision  
To drive them at division;  
And finally in conclusion  
To bring them to confusion

<sup>1</sup>hinder.

Saint Albans, to record,  
 Whereof this ungracious lord  
 Hath made himself abbot,  
 Against their wills, God wot!  
 All this he doth deal  
 Under strength of the great seal,  
 And by his legacy:<sup>1</sup>  
 Which madly he doth apply  
 Unto an extravagancy  
 Picked out of all good law,  
 With reasons that be raw.

Yet, when he took first his hat,  
 He said he knew what was what;  
 All justice he pretended,  
 All things should be amended,  
 All wrongs he would redress,  
 All injuries he would repress,  
 All purjuries he would oppress!  
 And yet this graceless elf,  
 He is purjured himself!  
 As plainly it doth appear  
 Who list to inquire  
 In the registry  
 Of my Lord of Canterbury,  
 To whom he was professed  
 In three points expressed:  
 The first, to do him reverence:  
 The second, to owe obedience:  
 The third, with whole affection  
 To be under his subjection.  
 But now he maketh objection,  
 Under the protection  
 Of the king's great seal,  
 That he setteth never a deal  
 By his former oath,

<sup>1</sup>negative power.

Whether God be pleased or wroth!  
 He maketh so proud pretence,  
 That in his *equipolens*  
 He judgeth him equivalent  
 To God omnipotent!  
 But yet beware the rod,  
 And the stroke of God!

The apostle Peter  
 Had a poor mitre  
 And a poor cope  
 When he was create Pope,  
 First in Antioche.  
 He did never approach  
 Of Rome to the See  
 With such dignitie.

Saint Dunstan, what was he?  
 Nothing, he saith, like to me!  
 There is a diversitie  
 Between him and me:  
 We pass him in degree,  
 As *legatus a latere*!

*Ecce, sacerdos magnus,*<sup>1</sup>  
 That will 'head us and hang us,  
 And straightly strangle us  
 An he may fang<sup>2</sup> us!  
 Decree and decretal,  
 Constitution provincial,  
 Nor no law canonical,  
 Shall let the priest pontifical  
 To sit in *causa sanguinis*.  
 Now God amend what is amiss!  
 For I suppose that he is  
 Of Jeremy the whisking rod,  
 The flail, the scourge of Almighty God.

<sup>1</sup>Behold the great priest.

<sup>2</sup>catch hold of.

This Naaman Sirus,<sup>1</sup>  
 So fell and irous,<sup>2</sup>  
 So full of melancholy,  
 With a flap afore his eye,  
 Men ween that he is poxy,<sup>3</sup>  
 Or else his surgeons they lie  
 For, as far as they can spy  
 By the craft of surgery  
 It is *manus Domini*!  
 And yet this proud Antiochus,  
 He is so ambitious,  
 So elate, and so vicious,  
 And so cruel-hearted,  
 That he will not be converted:  
 For he setteth God apart!  
 He is now so overthwart,  
 And so pained with pangs,  
 That all his trust hangs  
 In Balthasar,<sup>4</sup> which healed  
 Domingo's nose that was wealed:  
 That Lombard's nose mean I  
 That standeth yet awry;  
 It was not healed alderbest,<sup>5</sup>  
 It standeth somewhat on the west!  
 I mean Domingo Lomelin  
 That was wont to win  
 Much money of the king  
 At the cards and hasarding:  
 Balthasar, that healed Domingo's nose  
 From the pustuled poxy pose,  
 Now with his gums of Araby  
 Hath promised to heal our cardinal's eye.

<sup>1</sup>i.e. the Syrian.<sup>2</sup>So fierce and irate.<sup>3</sup>This was one of the charges afterwards brought against Wolsey in Parliament.<sup>4</sup>Balthasar de Guercis, surgeon to Catherine of Arragon.<sup>5</sup>thoroughly.

Yet some surgeons put a doubt  
 Lest he will put it clean out,  
 And make him lame of his nether limbs:  
 God send him sorrow for his sins!

Some men might ask a question,  
 By whose suggestion  
 I took on hand this wark,  
 Thus boldly for to bark?  
 And, men, list to hark,  
 And my words mark,  
 I will answer like a clerk: —

For, truly and unfeigned,  
 I am forcibly constrained  
 At Juvenal's request  
 To write of this glorious geste,  
 Of this vain-glorious beast,  
 His fame to be increased  
 At every solemn feast;

*Quia difficile est*  
*Satiram non scribere*<sup>1</sup>!

Now, master doctor, how say ye?  
 Whatsoever your name be,  
 What though ye be nameless,  
 Ye shall not escape blameless,  
 Nor yet shall 'scape shameless!  
 Maister doctor, in your degree,  
 Yourself madly ye over-see!  
 Blame Juvenal, and blame not me!  
 Maister doctor Diricum,  
*Omne animi vitium*, etc.<sup>2</sup> —  
 As Juvenal doth record,  
 A small default in a great lord,  
 A little crime in a great estate,  
 Is much more inordinate,

<sup>1</sup>"Because it is difficult not to write satire" (Juvenal, *Sat.* i. 30).

<sup>2</sup>"Every vice of the soul . . ." (Juvenal. *Sat.* viii. 140).

And more horrible to behold,  
 Than any other a thousand fold.  
 Ye put to blame ye wot ne'er whom!  
 Ye may wear a cock's-comb!  
 Your fond head in your furréd hood!  
 Hold ye your tongue, ye can no good!  
 And at more convenient time  
 I may fortune for to rime  
 Somewhat of your madness;  
 For small is your sadness  
 To put any man in lack,<sup>1</sup>  
 And say ill behind his back.

And my words mark truly,  
 That ye cannot bide thereby,  
 For *smigma non est sinamonum*,  
 But *de absentibus nil nisi bonum*.  
 Complain, or do what ye will,  
 Of your complaint it shall not skill:  
 This is the tenor of my bill,  
 A dawcock ye be, and so shall be still!

<sup>1</sup>blame.

## A REPLICATION

*Honorificatissimo, amplissimo, longeque reverendissimo in Christo patri, ac Domino, domino Thomæ, etc., tituli sanctæ Cecilie, sacrosanctæ Romanæ ecclesiæ presbytero, Cardinali meritissimo, et apostolicæ sedis legato, a latereque legato superillustri, etc., Skeltonis laureatus, or. reg., humillimum dicit obsequium cum omni debita reverentia, tanto tamque magnifico digna principe sacerdotum, totiusque justitiæ æqualissimo moderatore, necnon præsentis opusculi fautore excellentissimo, etc., ad cujus auspiciatissimam contemplationem, sub memorabili prelo gloriosæ immortalitatis, præsens pagella felicitatur, etc.*<sup>1</sup>

### A REPLICATION AGAINST CERTAIN YOUNG SCHOLARS ABJURED OF LATE<sup>2</sup>

#### ARGUMENTUM

*Crassantes nimium, nimium sterilesque labruscas,  
Vinea quas Domini Sabaot non sustinet ultra  
Laxius expandi, nostra est resecare voluntas.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>To the most honourable, most mighty, and by far the most reverend father in Christ and in the Lord, Lord Thomas, etc., of the title of the sacred Cecilian, presbyter of the Holy Roman Church, the most deserving cardinal, Legate of the Apostolic See, and the most illustrious legate *a latere*, etc., Skelton Laureate, *ora. reg.*, declares humble allegiance with all fit reverence due to such a great and magnificent Chief of Priests, most equitable moderator of all justice, and moreover the most excellent patron of the present little book, etc., to whose most auspicious judgement [*or* at whose most auspicious contemplation, i.e. command], under the memorable seal[?] of a glorious immortality, the present little treatise is commended [*or* devised – see *L'envoy*].

<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Brie (*Skelton-Studien*) has shewn that two young scholars, Thomas Bilney and Thomas Arthur, were abjured on December 8th, 1527, and that there is every reason for supposing that the following refers to them. This places the *Replication* as Skelton's last known poem.

<sup>3</sup>The too sour, and too unfruitful, wild grapes, which the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth does not suffer to flourish more luxuriously, it is our desire to cut down.



*Cum privilegio a rege indulto.*<sup>1</sup>

Protestation alway canonically prepensed, professed, and with good deliberation made, that this little pamphlet, called The Replication of Skelton Laureate, *ora. reg.*, remording divers recrayed<sup>2</sup> and much unreasonable errors of certain sophisticate scholars and reckless young heretics lately abjured, etc., shall evermore be, with all obsequious readiness, humbly submitted unto the right discreet reformation of the reverend prelates and much noble doctors of our Mother Holy Church, etc.

*Ad aliam Universitatem Cantabrigensem.*<sup>3</sup>

EULOGIUM CONSOLATIONIS<sup>4</sup>

*Alma parens, O Cantabrigensis,  
Cur lacrymaris? Esto, tui sint  
Degeneres hi filioli, sed  
Non ob inertes, O pia mater,  
Insciolos vel decolor esto.  
Progenies non nobilis omnis,  
Quam tua forsam mamma fovebat.  
Tu tamen esto Palladis almae  
Gloria pollens plena Minervæ,  
Dum radiabunt astra polorum:  
Jamque valeto, meque foveo,  
Namque tibi quondam carus alumnus eram.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>With the privilege conceded by the king.

<sup>2</sup>recreant.

<sup>3</sup>To the bountiful University of Cambridge.

<sup>4</sup>Eulogy of Consolation.

<sup>5</sup>Bountiful mother, O Cambridge, why dost thou weep? [*or why art thou wept for?*] So be it, let these little sons of thine be degenerate . . . [*?*] All the ignoble progeny which perchance your breasts have suckled. But be thou the full blooming glory of Pallas Minerva, so long as the stars of the poles shall shine. And now farewell, and look kindly upon me, for I was once your dear nursling.

How young scholars nowadays enbolned<sup>1</sup> with the fly-blown blast of the much vain-glorious pipping wind, when they have delectably licked a little of the licorous electuary of lusty<sup>2</sup> learning, in the much studious school-house of scrupulous Philology, counting themselves clerks excellently informed and transcendingly sped<sup>3</sup> in much high conning, and when they have once superciliously caught

A little rag of rhetoric,  
 A less lump of logic,  
 A piece or a patch of philosophy,  
 Then forthwith by and by  
 They tumble so in theology,  
 Drowned in dregs of divinity,  
 That they judge them self able to be  
 Doctors of the chair in the Vintrie  
 At the Three Cranes,<sup>4</sup>  
 To magnify their names!  
 But madly it frames,  
 For all that they preach and teach  
 Is further than their wit will reach:  
 Thus by demerits of their abuson,  
 Finally they fall to careful confusion  
 To bear a fagot, or to be enflamed<sup>5</sup>:  
 Thus are they undone and utterly shamed.

*Ergo:*

*Licet non enclitice,  
 Tamen enthymematice,  
 Notandum imprimis,  
 Ut ne quid nimis.*

*Tantum pro primo.<sup>6</sup>*

Over this, for a more ample process to be further related and continued, and of every true Christenman laudably to

<sup>1</sup>puffed up. <sup>2</sup>pleasant. <sup>3</sup>versed. <sup>4</sup>tavern so called. <sup>5</sup>burned.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore: . . . It must be noted in the first place that nothing may be in excess. So much for the first, *or* in the first place.

be employed, justified, and constantly maintained; as touching the sour theologisation of these demi divines, and Stoical students, and friskajolly younkerkins, much better bained<sup>1</sup> than brained, basked and bathed in their wild burbling and boiling blood, fervently reboiled with the infatuate flames of their reckless youth and witless wantonness, embraced and interlaced with a much fantastical frenzy of their insensate sensuality, surmised unsurely in their periermenial principles, to prate and to preach proudly and lewdly, and loudly to lie; and yet they were but feebly informed in Master Porphyry's problems, and have waded but weakly in his three manner of clerkly works, analytical, topical, and logical: howbeit they were puffed so full of vain-glorious pomp and arrogant elation, that popeholy and peevish presumption provoked them to publish and to preach to people imprudent perilously, how it was idolatry to offer to images of our Blessed Lady, or to pray and go on pilgrimages, or to make oblations to any images of saints in churches or elsewhere.

Against which erroneous errors, odious, orgulous,<sup>2</sup> and fly-blown opinions, etc.,

To the honour of our Blessed Lady,  
And her most Blessed Baby,  
I purpose for to reply  
Against this horrible heresy  
Of these young heretics, that stink unbrent,<sup>3</sup>  
Whom I now summon and convent;  
That lewdly have their time spent  
In their study abominable,  
Our glorious Lady to disable,  
And heinously on her to babble  
With language detestable!  
With your lips polluted  
Against Her Grace disputed,  
Which is the most clear crystal  
Of all pure cleanness virginal,

<sup>1</sup>boned.<sup>2</sup>insolent.<sup>3</sup>unburnt.

That our Saviour bear,  
Which us redeemed from care.

I say, thou mad March hare,  
I wonder how ye dare  
Open your jangling jaws  
To preach in any clause,  
Like prating popping daws,  
Against her excellence,  
Against her reverence,  
Against her pre-eminence,  
Against her magnificence,  
That never did offence.

Ye heretics recrayed,<sup>1</sup>  
Wot ye what ye said  
Of Mary, mother and maid?  
With bawdry at her ye brayed!  
With bawdry words unmeet  
Your tongues were too fleet;  
Your sermon was not sweet;  
Ye were nothing discreet;  
Ye were in a drunken heat!  
Like heretics confettered,  
Ye count yourselves well-lettered!  
Your learning is stark nought,  
For shamefully ye have wrought,  
And to shame yourselves have brought.

Because ye her misnamed,  
And would have her defamed,  
Your madness she attamed;  
For ye were worldly shamed  
At Paul's Cross openly,  
All men can testify.  
There, like a sort<sup>2</sup> of sots,  
Ye were fain to bear faggots;

<sup>1</sup>recreant.<sup>2</sup>set.

At the feast of her Conception  
Ye suffered such correction.

*Sive per aequivocum,*<sup>1</sup>  
*Sive per univocum,*<sup>2</sup>  
*Sive sic, sive* not so,<sup>3</sup>  
Ye were brought to, Lo, lo, lo!  
See where the heretics go,  
Witless, wandering to and fro!  
With Te he, ta ha, bo ho, bo ho!  
And such wanderings many mo.  
Helas, ye wretches, ye may be woe!  
Ye may sing well-a-way,  
And curse both night and day  
When ye were bred and born,  
And when ye were priestes shorn,  
Thus to be laughed to scorn,  
Thus tattered and thus torn!  
Thorough your own folly  
Ye be blowen with the fly  
Of horrible heresy!  
Fain ye were to reny,<sup>4</sup>  
And mercy for to cry,  
Or be burnt by and by,  
Confessing how ye did lie  
In preaching shamefully.

Yourselves thus ye discurd<sup>5</sup>  
As clerks unassured,  
With ignorance obscured!  
Ye are unhappily vred.<sup>6</sup>  
In your dialetical,  
And principles syllogistical,  
If ye to remembrance call

<sup>1</sup>Either through the equivocal.    <sup>2</sup>Or through the unequivocal.

<sup>3</sup>Or so or not so.

<sup>4</sup>renounce.

<sup>5</sup>discovered.

<sup>6</sup>ill-fortuned.

How *sylogisari*  
*Non est ex particulari,*  
*Neque negativis,*  
*Recte concludere si vis,*  
*Et caetera, id genus.*<sup>1</sup>  
 Ye could not *corde tenus*,<sup>2</sup>  
 Nor answer *verbo tenus*,<sup>3</sup>  
 When prelacy you opposed;  
 Your heartès then were hosed,<sup>4</sup>  
 Your relations reposed;  
 And yet ye supposed  
*Respondere ad quantum.*<sup>5</sup>  
 But ye were *confuse tantum*,<sup>6</sup>  
 Surrendering your suppositions,  
 For there ye missed your cushions.

Would God, for your own ease,  
 That wise Harpocrates<sup>7</sup>  
 Had your mouthès stopped,  
 And your tonguès cropped,  
 When ye logic hopped,  
 And in the pulpit hopped,  
 And foolishly there fopped,  
 And porishly forth popped  
 Your schismaticate saws  
 Against Goddès laws,  
 And shewéd yourselves daws!<sup>8</sup>  
 Ye argued argumentès,  
 As it were upon the elenkes,<sup>9</sup>  
*De rebus apparentibus*<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup>How to syllogise, it is not from the particular, nor from negatives, if you want to conclude rightly, etc., in a case like this.

<sup>2</sup>in your heart (*or* as far as the heart).

<sup>3</sup>in your name (*or* as far as the word).

<sup>4</sup>in your hose.

<sup>5</sup>to give your opinion so much.

<sup>6</sup>so much confounded.

<sup>7</sup>Egyptian God of Silence.

<sup>8</sup>simpletons.

<sup>9</sup>elenchus—i.e. in logic.

<sup>10</sup>concerning apparent things.

*Et non existentibus*<sup>1</sup>;  
 And ye would appear wise,  
 But ye were foolish nice<sup>2</sup>!  
 Yet by means of that 'vice'<sup>3</sup>  
 Ye did provoke and 'tice,  
 Oftener than once or twice,  
 Many a good man  
 And many a good woman,  
 By way of their devotion  
 To help you to promotion,  
 Whose charity well regarded  
 Cannot be unrewarded.

I say it for no sedition,  
 But under patient tuition –  
 It is half a superstition  
 To give you exhibition<sup>4</sup>  
 To maintain with your schools,  
 And to prove yourselves such fools!

Some of you had ten pound,  
 Therewith for to be found<sup>5</sup>  
 At the university,  
 Employed which might have be  
 Much better other ways.  
 But, as the man says,  
 The blind eateth many a fly!  
 What may be meant hereby  
 Ye may soon make construction  
 With right little instruction;  
 For it is an ancient bruit,<sup>6</sup>  
 Such apple-tree, such fruit.  
 What should I prosecute,  
 Or more of this to clatter?  
 Return we to our matter.

<sup>1</sup>And non-existent.<sup>4</sup>A scholarship.<sup>2</sup>i.e. altogether foolish.<sup>5</sup>maintained.<sup>3</sup>device.<sup>6</sup>saying.

Ye soared over-high  
 In the hierarchy  
 Of Jovenian's heresy,  
 Your names to magnify,  
 Among the scabbéd skies<sup>1</sup>  
 Of Wyclif's flesh-flies;  
 Ye stringed so Luther's lute  
 That ye dance all in a suit  
 The heretics' ragged ray,<sup>2</sup>  
 That brings you out of the way  
 Of Holy Church's lay,<sup>3</sup>  
 Ye shail *inter enigmata*<sup>4</sup>  
 And *inter paradigmata*,<sup>5</sup>  
 Marked in your cradles  
 To bear faggots for baubles.

And yet some men say  
 How ye are this day,  
 And be now as ill,  
 And so ye will be still,  
 As ye were before.  
 What should I reckon more?

Men have you in suspicion  
 How ye have small contrition  
 Of that ye have miswrought.  
 For, if it were well sought,  
 One of you there was  
 That laughed when he did pass  
 With his faggot in procession!  
 He counted it for no correction,  
 But with scornful affection  
 Took it for a sport,  
 His heresy to support!  
 Whereat a thousand gazed  
 As people half-amazed,

<sup>1</sup>clouds.<sup>2</sup>A dance.<sup>3</sup>law.<sup>4</sup>stumble among riddles<sup>5</sup>among paradigms.



And thought in him small grace  
His folly so to face.<sup>1</sup>

Some judged in this case  
Your penance took no place,  
Your penance was too light;  
And thought, if ye had right,  
Ye should take further pain  
To resort again  
To places where ye have preached,  
And your lollardy<sup>2</sup> learning taught,  
And there to make relation  
In open prediction,  
And 'knowledge your offence  
Before open audience, –  
How falsely ye had surmised,  
And devilishly devised  
The people to seduce,  
And chase them through the mews<sup>3</sup>  
Of your naughty counsell,  
To hunt them into hell  
With blowing out your horns,  
Full of mockish scorns,  
With chating and rechating,<sup>4</sup>  
And your busy prating!  
Of the gospel and the epistles  
Ye pick out many thistles,  
And brimly<sup>5</sup> with your bristles  
Ye cobble and ye clout  
Holy Scripture so about  
That people are in great doubt  
And fear lest they be out  
Of all good Christian order.  
Thus all thing ye disorder  
Throughout every border.

<sup>1</sup>vaunt.<sup>2</sup>heretical.<sup>3</sup>alley, side-track<sup>4</sup>sound the retreat in hunting.<sup>5</sup>fiercely.

## MAJOR SATIRES

It had been much better  
Ye had never learned a letter,  
For your ignorance is greater  
(I make you fast and sure)  
Than all your literature.  
Ye are but lither *logici*,<sup>1</sup>  
But much worse *isagogici*,  
For ye have induced a sect  
With heresy all infect.  
Wherefore ye are well checked,  
And by Holy Church correct,  
And in manner as abject,  
For evermore suspect,  
And banished in effect  
From all honest company,  
Because ye have eaten a fly,  
To your great villany,  
That never more may die!

Come forth, ye popeholy,  
Full of melancholy!  
Your mad hypocrisy,  
And your idiocy,  
And your vain-glory,  
Have made you eat the fly,  
Puffed full of heresy,  
To preach it idolatry  
Whoso doth magnify  
That glorious maid Mary;  
That glorious maid and mother,  
So was there never another  
But that princess alone,  
To whom we are bound, each one,  
The image of her grace  
To reverence in every place.

<sup>1</sup>bad logicians.

I say, ye brainless beasts,  
 Why jangle you such jests?  
 In your divinity  
 Of Luther's affinity!  
 To the people of lay fee<sup>1</sup>  
 Railing in your rages  
 To worship none images,  
 Nor do pilgrimages!  
 I say, ye devilish pages,  
 Full of such dotages,  
 Count ye yourselves good clerks,  
 And snapper<sup>2</sup> in such works?

Saint Gregory and Saint Ambrose,  
 Ye have read them, I suppose?  
 Saint Jerome and Saint Austen,  
 With other many holy men?  
 Saint Thomas de Aquino,  
 With other doctors many mo,  
 Which *de latria*<sup>3</sup> do treat?  
 They say how *latria* is an honour great  
 Belonging to the Deity:  
 To this ye needs must agree.

But, I trow, yourselves ye oversee<sup>4</sup>  
 What 'longeth to Christ's humanitie!  
 If ye have read *de hyperdulia*,  
 Then ye know what betokeneth *dulia*.<sup>5</sup>  
 Then shall ye find it firm and stable,  
 And to our faith much agreeable  
 To worship images of saints.  
 Wherefore make ye no more restraints,

<sup>1</sup>laity.<sup>2</sup>stumble.<sup>3</sup>of worship.<sup>4</sup>overlook.

<sup>5</sup>i.e. If you have read of the very great adoration accorded to the Virgin — *hyperdulia* — then you know what worship is due to the Saints — *dulia*.

But mend your minds that are mazed;  
 Or else doubtless ye shall be blazed,  
 And be burnt at a stake,<sup>1</sup>  
 If further business that ye make.  
 Therefore I 'vise you to forsake  
 Of heresy the devilish schools,  
 And cry Godmercy, like frantic fools!

*Tantum pro secundo.*<sup>2</sup>

PERORATIO AD NUPER ABJURATOS QUOSDAM  
 HYPOTHETICOS HERETICOS, ETC.<sup>3</sup>

*Audite, viri Ismaelitae, non dico Israelitae;  
 Audite, inquam, viri Madianitae, Ascalonitae;  
 Ammonitae, Gabaonitae, audite verba que loquar.*<sup>4</sup>

*Opus evangelii est cibus perfectorum;  
 Sed quia non estis de genere bonorum,  
 Qui caterisatis categorias cacodaemoniorum,*

*Ergo*

*Et reliqua vestra problemata, schemata,  
 Dilemmata, sinto anathemata!  
 Ineluctabile argumentum est.*<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bilney was burnt in 1531, two years after Skelton's death.

<sup>2</sup>So much for the second, or in the second place.

<sup>3</sup>The peroration against certain recently abjured hypothetical heretics.

<sup>4</sup>Hear, men of Ishmael, I do not say Israel;  
 Hear, say I, men of Madian, of Askalon,  
 Of Ammon, of Gabion, hear the words I shall speak.

<sup>5</sup>The Book of the Gospel is the food of the perfect; but, because you are not from the race of the good, you who "caterise" [make improper use of (?)] the categories of the inspired, therefore also the rest of your problems, schemes, dilemmas, may they be anathema! It is an inescapable argument.

A confutation responsive, or an inevitably prepensed answer to all wayward or froward altercations that can or may be made or objected against Skelton Laureate, devisor of this Replication, etc.

Why fall ye at debate  
With Skelton Laureate,  
Reputing him unable  
To gainsay replicable  
Opinions detestable  
Of heresy execrable?

Ye say that poetry  
May not fly so high  
In theology,  
Nor analogy,  
Nor philology,  
Nor philosophy,  
To answer or reply  
• Against such heresy?

Wherefore by and by,  
Now consequently,  
I call to this reckoning  
David, that royal king,  
Whom Hieronimous,  
That doctor glorious,  
Doth both write and call  
Poet of poets all,  
And prophet principal.

This may not be remorded,  
For it is well recorded  
In his epistle *ad Paulinum*,  
*Presbyterium divinum*,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Which is prefixed to the Vulgate. (See Hieronym, *Opera* i. 1011, ed. 1609.)

Where word for word ye may  
Read what Jerome there doth say.

*David, inquit, Simonides noster, Pindarus, et Alcæus, Flaccus quoque, Catullus, atque Serenus, Christum lyra personat, et in decachordo psalterio ab inferis excitat resurgentem. Haec Hier.*

## THE ENGLISH

King David the prophet, of prophets principal,  
Of poets chief poet, Saint Jerome doth write,  
Resembled to Simonides, that poet lyrical  
Among the Greeks most relucient of light,  
In that faculty which shined as Phœbus bright:  
Like to Pindarus in glorious poetry,  
Like unto Alcheus, he doth him magnify.

Flaccus nor Catullus with him may not compare,  
Nor solemn Serenus, for all his harmony  
In metrical muses, his harping we may spare;  
For David, our poet, harped so melodiously  
Of our Saviour Christ in his decachord psaltry,  
That at his resurrection he harped out of hell  
Old patriarchs and prophets in heaven with him to dwell.

*Return we to our former process.*

Then, if this noble king  
Thus can harp and sing  
With his harp of prophesy  
And spiritual poetry,  
As Saint Jerome saith,  
To whom we must give faith,  
Warbling with his strings  
Of such theological things,  
Why have ye then disdain  
At poets, and complain  
How poets do but feign?

Ye do much great outrage  
For to disparage  
And to discourage  
The fame matriculate  
Of poets laureate.

For if ye sadly<sup>1</sup> look,  
And wisely read the *Book*  
*Of Good Advertisement*,<sup>2</sup>  
With me ye must consent  
And infallibly agree  
Of necessity,  
How there is a spiritual,  
And a mysterial,  
And a mystical  
Effect engerial,  
As Greeks do it call,  
Of such an industry;  
And such a pregnancy,  
Of heavenly inspiration  
In laureate creation,  
Of poets commendation,  
That of divine miseration  
God maketh his habitation  
In poets which excells,  
And sojourns with them and dwells.

By whose inflammation  
Of spiritual instigation  
And divine inspiration  
We are kindled in such fashion  
With heat of the Holy Ghost  
(Which is God of mightës most),  
That he our pen doth lead,  
And maketh in us such speed  
That forthwith we must need  
With pen and ink proceed,

<sup>1</sup>seriously.

<sup>2</sup>One of Skelton's lost poems.

Sometime for affection,  
 Sometime for sad direction,  
 Sometime for correction,  
 Sometime under protection  
 Of patient sufferance,  
 With sober circumstance,  
 Our mindes to advance  
 To no man's annoyance.  
 Therefore no grievance,  
 I pray you, for to take  
 In this that I do make  
 Against these frenetics,  
 Against these lunatics,  
 Against these schismatics,  
 Against these heretics,  
 Now of late abjuréd,  
 Most unhappily vred:  
 For be ye well-assuréd  
 That frenzy, nor jealousy,  
 Nor heresy will never die.

*Dixi*

*iniquis, Nolite inique agere; et delinquentibus, Nolite exaltare  
 cornu.*<sup>1</sup>

*Tantum pro tertio.*<sup>2</sup>

*De raritate poetarum, deque gymnosophistarum, philosophorum,  
 theologorum, caeterorumque, eruditorum infinita numerositate,  
 Skel. L. epitoma.*<sup>3</sup>

*Sunt infiniti, sunt innumerique sophistae,  
 Sunt infiniti, sunt innumerique logistae,*

<sup>1</sup>I said to the wicked, Be not stubborn; and to evil-doers, Rejoice not in your strength.

<sup>2</sup>So much for the third, or in the third place.

<sup>3</sup>About the rarity of poets, and the infinite abundance of gymnosophists, philosophers, theologians, and the rest of the learned, this is Skelton Laureate's epitome.



*Innumeri sunt philosophi, sunt theologique,  
Sunt infiniti doctores, suntque magistri  
Innumeri; sed sunt pauci rarique poetae.  
Hinc omne est rarum carum: reor ergo poetas  
Ante alios omnes divino flamine flatos.  
Sic Plato divinat, divinat sicque Socrates;  
Sic magnus Macedo, sic Cæsar, maximus heros  
Romanus, celebres semper coluere poetas.<sup>1</sup>*

*Thus endeth the Replication  
of Skelton Laureate.*

*To My Lord Cardinal's Right Noble Grace, etc.*

## L'ENVOY

Go, little quaire,<sup>2</sup> apace,  
In most humble wise,  
Before his noble grace,  
That caused you to devise  
This little enterprise;  
And him most lowly pray,  
In his mind to comprise  
Those words his grace did say  
Of an amice gray.<sup>3</sup>

*Je foy enterment<sup>4</sup> en sa bone grace.*

<sup>1</sup>Infinite, innumerable are the sophists, infinite, innumerable are the logicians, innumerable are the philosophers and the theologians, infinite in number are doctors, and masters; but poets are few and rare. Hence all that is rare is dear: I think, then, that poets before all others are filled with the divine breath. So Plato thinks and so Socrates; so the great Macedonian, so Cæsar, the greatest of Roman heroes, always honoured the renowned poets.

<sup>2</sup>book.

<sup>3</sup>Does this mean that Skelton still had hopes of preferment from the Cardinal?

<sup>4</sup>i.e. *Je fie entièrement*, etc.



*A Right Delectable Treatise upon a Goodly*

GARLAND OR CHAPLET OF LAUREL

*By Maister Skelton, Poet Laureate, Studiously Devised at Sherriff-Hutton Castle, in the Forest of Galtres, wherein are comprised many and divers solacious and right pregnant electuaries of singular pleasure, as more at large it doth appear in the process following.*

*Eterno mansura die dum sidera fulgent,  
Aequora dumque tument, haec laurea nostra virebit:  
Hinc nostrum celebre et nomen referetur ad astra,  
Undique Skeltonis memorabitur alter Adonis.<sup>1</sup>*

Erecting my sight toward the zodiac,  
The signs xii. for to behold afar,  
When Mars retrogradant reverséd his back,  
Lord of the year in his orbicular,  
Put up his sword, for he could make no war,  
And when Lucina plenarly did shine,  
Scorpione ascending degrees twice nine;

In place alone then musing in my thought  
How all thing passeth as doth the summer flower,  
On every half<sup>2</sup> my reasons forth I sought,  
How often fortune varieth in an hour,  
Now clear weather, forthwith a stormy shower;  
All thing compasséd, no perpetuity,  
But now in wealth, now in adversity.

<sup>1</sup>While the stars shine with eternal day, and while the seas swell,  
these our laurels shall be green; our illustrious name shall be translated to the sky, and everywhere shall Skelton be renowned as another Adonis.

<sup>2</sup>side.

So deeply drownéd I was in this dump,  
 Encrampishéd<sup>1</sup> so sore was my conceit,  
 That, me to rest, I leant me to a stump  
 Of an oak, that sometime grew full straight,  
 A mighty tree and of a noble height,  
 Whose beauty blasted was with the boisterous wind,  
 His leavés lost, the sap was from the rind.

Thus stood I in the frithy<sup>2</sup> forest of Galtress,  
 Ensoakéd with silt of the miry moss,  
 Where hartés bellowing, emboséd<sup>3</sup> with distress,  
 Ran on the range so long, that I suppose  
 Few men can tell now where the hind-calf goes;  
 Fair fall that forster<sup>4</sup> that so well can bait his hound!  
 But of my purpose now turn we to the ground.

Whiles I stood musing in this meditation,  
 In slumbering I fell and half in a sleep;  
 And whether it were of imagination,  
 Or of humours superflue, that often will creep  
 Into the brain by drinking over-deep,  
 Or it proceeded of fatal persuasion,  
 I cannot well tell you what was the occasion.

But suddenly at once, as I me adviséd,  
 As one in a trance or in an ecstasy,  
 I saw a pavilion wondrously disguiséd,  
 Garnished fresh after my fantasy,  
 Entachéd<sup>5</sup> with pearl and stonés preciously,  
 The ground engroséd and bet with bourné<sup>6</sup> gold,  
 That passing goodly it was to behold.

Within it, a princess excellent of port;  
 But to recount her rich habiliment,

<sup>1</sup>Encramped.    <sup>2</sup>woody.    <sup>3</sup>foaming at the mouth.    <sup>4</sup>forester.

<sup>5</sup>Inlaid.    <sup>6</sup>ground-work enriched . . . beaten . . . burnished.

And what estates to her did resort,  
 Thereto am I full insufficient;  
 A goddess immortal she did represent;  
 As I heard say, Dame Pallas was her name;  
 To whom supplied<sup>1</sup> the royal Queen of Fame.

*The QUEEN OF FAME to DAME PALLAS*

Princess most puissant, of high pre-eminence,  
 Renowned lady above the starry heaven,  
 All other transcending, of every congruence  
 Madame regent of the sciences seven,  
 To whose estate all nobleness must leanen,<sup>2</sup>  
 My supplication to you I erect,  
 Whereof I beseech you to tender the effect.

Not unremembered it is unto your grace  
 How you gave me a royal commandment  
 That in my court Skelton should have a place,  
 Because that his time he studiously hath spent  
 In your service; and, to the accomplishment  
 Of your requests, registered in his name  
 With laureate triumph in the court of Fame.

But, good madam, the accustom and usage  
 Of ancient poets, ye wot full well, hath been  
 Themselves to embusie with all their whole corage,<sup>3</sup>  
 So that their workis might famously be seen,  
 In figure whereof they wear the laurel green;  
 But how it is, Skelton is wondrous slack,  
 And, as we dare, we find in him great lack<sup>4</sup>:

For, ne were<sup>5</sup> only he hath your promotion,  
 Out of my bookis full soon I should him raise;

<sup>1</sup>prayed.

<sup>2</sup>bow.

<sup>3</sup>heart.

<sup>4</sup>fault.

<sup>5</sup>were it not.

But sith he hath tasted of the sugared potion  
 Of Helicon's well, refreshéd with your grace,  
 And will not endeavour himself to purchase  
 The favour of ladies with wordès elect,  
 It is fitting that ye must him correct.

DAME PALLAS *to the* QUEEN OF FAME

The sum of your purpose, as we are adviséd,  
 Is that our servant is somewhat too dull;  
 Wherein this answer for him we have compriséd,  
 How rivers run not till the spring be full;  
 Better a dumb mouth than a brainless skull;  
 For if he gloriously polish his matter,  
 Then men will say how he doth but flatter;

And if so him fortune to write true and plain,  
 As sometime he must vices remord,<sup>1</sup>  
 Then some will say he hath but little brain,  
 And how his words with reason will not accord;  
 Beware, for writing remaineth of recofd;  
 Displease not an hundred for one man's pleasure;  
 Who writeth wisely hath a great treasure.

Also, to furnish better his excuse,  
 Ovid was banishéd for such a skill,  
 And many more whom I could induce;  
 Juvenal was threat, parde, for to kill<sup>2</sup>  
 For certain invectives, yet wrote he none ill,  
 Saving he rubbéd some upon the gall;  
 It was not for him to abide the triall.

In general words, I say not greatly nay,  
 A poet sometime may for his pleasure taunt,  
 Speaking in parables, how the fox, the gray,<sup>3</sup>  
 The gander, the goose, and the huge elephant,  
 Went with the peacock against the pheasant;

<sup>1</sup>blame.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. for to be killed.

<sup>3</sup>badger.

The léopard came leaping, and said that he must,  
With help of the ram, lay all in the dust.

Yet divers there be, industrious of reason,  
Somewhat would gather in their conjecture  
Of such an endarkéd chapter some season;  
Howbeit, it were hard to construe this lecture;  
Sophisticated craftily is many a confecture<sup>1</sup>;  
Another man's mind difuse<sup>2</sup> is to expound;  
Yet hard is to make<sup>3</sup> but some fault be found.

*The QUEEN OF FAME to DAME PALLAS*

Madam, with favour of your benign sufferance,  
Unto your grace then make I this motive<sup>4</sup>:  
Whereto made ye me him to advance  
Unto the room of laureate promotive?  
Or whereto should he have that prerogative,  
But if he had made some memorial  
Whereby he might have a name immortal?

To pass the time in slothful idleness,  
Of your royal palace it is not the guise,  
But to do somewhat each man doth him 'dress:  
For how should Cato else be calléd wise,  
But that his bookis, which he did devise,  
Record the same? or why is had in mind  
Plato, but for that he left writing behind

For men to look on? Aristotle also,  
Of philosophers calléd the principal,  
Old Diogenes, with many other mo,  
Demosthenes, that orator royal,  
That gave Æschines such a cordial,  
That banished was he by his proposition,  
Against whom he could make no contradiction?

<sup>1</sup>composition.

<sup>2</sup>difficult.

<sup>3</sup>compose.

<sup>4</sup>motion.

DAME PALLAS *to the* QUEEN OF FAME

Soft, my good sister, and there a pause:  
 And was Æschines rebukéd as ye say?  
 Remember you well, point well that clause;  
 Wherefore then raséd ye not away  
 His name? or why is it, I you pray,  
 That he to your court is going and coming,  
 Sith he is slandered for default of conning<sup>1</sup>?

*The* QUEEN OF FAME *to* DAME PALLAS

Madame, your apposelle<sup>2</sup> is well inferred,  
 And at your advantage quickly it is  
 Touched, and hard for to be debarré;  
 Yet shall I answer your grace as in this,  
 With your reformation, if I say amiss,  
 For, but if your bounty did me assure,  
 Mine argument else could not long endure. •

As touching that Æschines is remembered,  
 That he so should be, meseemeth it fitting,  
 Albeit great part he hath surrendered  
 Of his honour, whose dissuasive in writing  
 To encourage Demosthenes was much exciting,  
 In setting out freshely<sup>3</sup> his crafty persuasion,  
 From which Æschines had none evasion.

The cause why Demosthenes so famously is bruited  
 Only proceeded for that he did outray •  
 Æschines, which was not shamefully confuted  
 But of that famous orator, I say,  
 Which passéd all other; wherefore I may  
 Among my records suffer him naméd,  
 For though he were vanquished, yet was he not shaméd.

<sup>1</sup>skill.<sup>2</sup>question.<sup>3</sup>elegantly.



As Jeromy, in his preamble *Frater Ambrosius*,<sup>1</sup>  
 From that I have said in no point doth vary,  
 Wherein he reporteth of the couragèous  
 Words that were much consolatory  
 By Æschines rehearsed to the great glory  
 Of Demosthenes, that was his utter foe:  
 Few shall ye find or none that will do so.

## DAME PALLAS to the QUEEN OF FAME

A thank to have, ye have well deservéd,  
 Your mind that can maintain so apparently;  
 But a great part yet ye have reservéd  
 Of that must follow then consequently,  
 Or else ye demean you inordinately;  
 For if ye laud him whom honour hath opprest,  
 Then he that doth worst is as good as the best.

But whom that ye favour, I see well, hath a name,  
 Be he never so little of substance,  
 And whom ye love not ye will put to shame;  
 Ye counterweigh not evenly your balance;  
 As well folly as wisdom oft ye do advance:  
 For report riseth many diverse ways:  
 Some be much spoken of for making of frays;

Some have a name for theft and bribery;  
 Some be called crafty that can pick a purse;  
 Some men be made of for their mockery;  
 Some careful cuckolds, some have their wivès curse;  
 Some famous wittols,<sup>2</sup> and they be much worse;  
 Some lithérons,<sup>3</sup> some losells,<sup>3</sup> some naughty packis<sup>3</sup>;  
 Some facers, some bracers, some make great crackis<sup>4</sup>;

<sup>1</sup>The Epistle of Jerome to Paulinus, prefixed to the Vulgate, begins with these words.

<sup>2</sup>tame cuckolds.

<sup>3</sup>Synonymous names for scoundrels.

<sup>4</sup>boasters . . . vaunters . . . boasts.

Some drunken dastards with their dry soulès;  
 Some sluggish slovens, that sleep day and night;  
 Riot and Revel be in your court rollès;  
 Maintenance and Mischief, these be men of might;  
 Extortion is counted with you for a knight;  
 These people by me have none assignement,  
 Yet they ride and run from Carlisle to Kent.

But little or nothing ye shall hear tell  
 Of them that have virtue by reason of conning,  
 Which sovereignly in honour should excell;  
 Men of such matters make but a mumming,<sup>1</sup>  
 For wisdom and sadness<sup>2</sup> be set out a-sunning;  
 And such of my servantès as I have promoted,  
 One fault or other in them shall be noted:

Either they will say he is too wise,  
 Or else he can nought but when he is at school;  
 Prove his wit, saith he, at cards or dice,  
 And ye shall well find he is a very fool;  
 Twish, set him a chair, or reach him a stoöl,  
 To sit him upon, and read Jack-a-Thrumès bible,  
 For truly it were pity that he sat idle!

*The QUEEN OF FAME to DAME PALLAS*

To make repugnance<sup>3</sup> against that ye have said  
 Of very duty it may not well accord,  
 But your benign sufferance for my discharge I laid,  
 For that I would not with you fall at dischord;  
 But yet I beseech your grace that good record  
 May be brought forth, such as can be found,  
 With laureate triumph why Skelton should be crown'd;

For else it were too great a derogation  
 Unto your palace, our noble court of Fame,

<sup>1</sup>keep mum, silent.      <sup>2</sup>seriousness.      <sup>3</sup>contradiction.

That any man under supportation  
 Without deserving should have the best game:  
 If he to the ample increase of his name  
 Can lay any workis that he hath compiléd,  
 I am content that he be not exiléd

From the laureate senate by force of proscription;  
 Or else, ye know well, I can do no less  
 But I must banish him from my jurisdiction,  
 As he hath acquainted him with idleness;  
 But if that he purpose to make a redress,  
 What he hath done, let it be brought to sight:  
 Grant my petition, I askê you but right.

DAME PALLAS *to the* QUEEN OF FAME

To your request we be well condescended:  
 Call forth, let see where is your clarionar,<sup>1</sup>  
 To blow a blast with his long breath extended;  
 Æolus, your trumpeter, that known is so far,  
 That bararag bloweth in every martial war,  
 Let him blow now, that we may take a view  
 What poetis we have at our retinue;

To see if Skelton will put himself in preas,<sup>2</sup>  
 Among the thickest of all the whole rout.  
 Make noise enough, for clatterers love no peace!  
 Let see, my sister, now speed you, go about;  
 Anon, I say, this trumpeter were found out,  
 And for no man hardly let him spare  
 To blow bararag till both his eyen stare.

## SKELTON POETA

Forthwith there rose among the throng  
 A wonderful noise, and on every side

<sup>1</sup>trumpeter.<sup>2</sup>in the company.

They presséd in fast; some thought they were too long;  
 Some were too hasty, and would no man bide;  
 Some whisperéd, some rownéd,<sup>1</sup> some spake, and some  
 cried,  
 With heaving and shouting, have in and have out;  
 Some ran the next<sup>2</sup> way, some ran about.

There was sueing to the Queen of Fame,  
 He plucked him back, and he went afore;  
 Nay, hold thy tongue, quod another, let me have the name!  
 Make room, said another, ye press all too sore!  
 Some said, Hold thy peace, thou gettest here no more!  
 'A thousand thousand I saw on a plump<sup>3</sup>;  
 With that I heard the noise of a trump,

That long time blew a full terrible blast,  
 Like to the boreal windès when they blow,  
 That towers and townès and trees down cast,  
 Drove cloudès together like driftès of snow;  
 The dreadful din drove all the rout on a row;  
 Some trembléd, some girnéd,<sup>4</sup> some gaspéd, some gazéd,  
 As people half peevish,<sup>5</sup> or men that were mazéd!

Anon all was whist,<sup>6</sup> as it were for the nonce,  
 And each man stood gazing and staring upon other!  
 With that there came in wondrously at once  
 A murmur of minstrels, that such another  
 Had I never seen, some softer, some louder;  
 Orpheus, the Thracian, harped melodiously  
 With Amphion, and other Muses of Arcady:

Whose heavenly harmony was so passing sure,  
 So truly proportionéd, and so well did agree,  
 So duly entunéd with every measúre,  
 That in the forest was none so great a tree  
 But that he danced for joy of that glee;

<sup>1</sup>muttered.<sup>2</sup>nearest.<sup>3</sup>mass.<sup>4</sup>grinned.<sup>5</sup>silly.<sup>6</sup>still.

The huge mighty oaks themself did advance,  
And leap from hillès to learn for to dance.

In so much the stump, whereto I me leant,  
Start all at once an hundredth foot back!  
With that I sprang up toward the tent  
Of noble Dame Pallas, whereof I spake;  
Where I saw come after, I wot, full little lack  
Of a thousand poetès assembled together!  
But Phœbus was foremost of all that came thether;

Of laurel leaves a coronal on his head,  
With hairs encrispéd yellow as the gold,  
Lamenting Daphne, whom with the dart of lead<sup>1</sup>  
Cupid hath striken so that she ne wold  
Consent to Phœbus to have his heart in hold;  
But, for to preserve her maidenhood clean,  
Transforméd was she into the laurel green.

Mingléd with mourning the most part of his muse,  
O thoughtful heart, was evermore his song!  
Daphne, my darling, why do you me refuse?  
Yet look on me, that lovéd you so long,  
Yet have compassion upon my painès strong!  
He sang also how, the tree as he did take  
Between his arms, he felt her body quake.<sup>2</sup>

Then he assurded<sup>3</sup> into this exclamation  
Unto Diana, the goddess immortal:  
O merciless madam, hard is your constellation,  
So close to keep your cloister virginall,  
Enharded adamant the cement of your wall!  
Alas, what ails you to be so overthwart,  
To banish pity out of a maiden's heart?

<sup>1</sup>From Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, i. 471.

<sup>3</sup>broke forth.

<sup>2</sup>Ovid, *Met.* i. 553.

Why have the gods shewéd me this cruelty,  
 Sith I contrivéd first principals medicinable?  
 I help all other of their infirmity,  
 But now to help myself I am not able;  
 That profiteth all other is nothing profitable  
 Unto me; alas, that herb nor gress  
 The fervent axes<sup>1</sup> of love cannot repress!

O fatal fortune! what have I offended?  
 Odious disdain, why array'st thou me in this fashion?  
 But sith I have lost now that I intended,  
 And may not attain it by no meditation,  
 Yet, in remembrance of Daphne's transformation,  
 All famous poets ensuing after me  
 Shall wear a garland of this laurel tree.

This said, a great number followéd by and by  
 Of poetis laureat<sup>2</sup> of many diverse nations;  
 Part of their names I think to specify:  
 First, old Quintilian with his Declamation<sup>3</sup>;  
 Theocritus with his bucolical relations;  
 Hesiodus, the economizar,  
 And<sup>4</sup> Homerus, the fresh historiari;

Prince of eloquence, Tullius Cicero,  
 With Salusty against Lucius Cateline,  
 That wrote the history of Iugurta also;  
 Ovid, enshrined with the Muses nine;  
 But blessed Bacchus, the pleasant god of wine,  
 Of clusters engroséd<sup>5</sup> with his ruddy floatès<sup>6</sup>  
 These orators and poets refreshéd their throatès!

<sup>1</sup>fits.

<sup>2</sup>Formerly *poet laureat* merely meant a person who had taken a degree in grammar, including rhetoric and versification. But the word *poet* was applied to a writer of prose as well as verse.

<sup>3</sup>swollen.

<sup>4</sup>drops.

Lucan, with Stacius in Achilliedos;  
 Percius pressed forth with his problems diffuse;  
 Virgil the Mantuan, with his Ænidos;  
 Juvenal satiric, that men maketh to muse;  
 But blessed Bacchus, the pleasant god of wine,  
 Of clusters engroséd with his ruddy floatès  
 These orators and poets refreshéd their throatès!

There Titus Livius himself did advance  
 With decadès historious, which that he mingleth  
 With matters that amount the Romans in substance;  
 Ennius that wrote of martial war at length;  
 But Blessed Bacchus, the potential god of strength,  
 Of clusters engroséd with his ruddy floatès  
 These orators and poets refreshéd their throatès!

Aulus Gelius, that noble historiari;  
 Horace also with his new poetry<sup>1</sup>;  
 Maister Terence, that famous comicar,  
 With Plautus, that wrote full many a comedy;  
 But blessed Bacchus was in their company,  
 Of clusters engroséd with his ruddy floatès  
 These orators and poets refreshéd their throatès!

Senec full soberly with his tragedies;  
 Boyce,<sup>2</sup> recomforted with his philosophy;  
 And Maximian, with his mad ditties,<sup>3</sup>  
 How doting age would jape with young folly;  
 But blessed Bacchus most reverent and holy,  
 Of clusters engroséd with his ruddy floatès  
 These orators and poets refreshéd their throatès!

There came John Bochas with his volumes great<sup>4</sup>;  
 Quintus Cursius, full craftily<sup>5</sup> that wrate

<sup>1</sup>i.e. Horace's *Art of Poetry*.

<sup>2</sup>Boëthius.

<sup>3</sup>*Elegiarum liber* of Maximianus.

<sup>4</sup>Boccaccio's *De Genealogia*, and *De Casibus Virorum et Foeminarum Illustrium*, rather than the *Decamerone*.

<sup>5</sup>skilfully.

Of Alexander; and Macrobius that did treat  
 Of Scipion's dream what was the true probate;  
 But blessed Bacchus that never man forgate,  
 Of clusters engroséd with his ruddy floatès  
 These orators and poets refreshéd their throats!

Poggio also, that famous Florentine,  
 Mustered there among them with many a mad tale;  
 With a friar of France men call Sir Gaguine,  
 That frownéd on me full angerly and pale;  
 But blessed Bacchus, that bote<sup>a</sup> is of all bale,  
 Of clusters engroséd with his ruddy floatès  
 These orators and poets refreshéd their throats!

Plutarch and Petrarch, two famous clerkis;  
 Lucilius and Valerius Maximus by name;  
 With Vicentius in *Speculo*,<sup>\*</sup> that wrote noble workis;  
 Propertius and Pisander, poets of noble fame;  
 But blessed Bacchus, that maistris<sup>\*</sup> oft doth frame,  
 Of clusters engroséd with his ruddy floatée  
 These notable poetis refreshéd their throats!

And as I thus sadly among them aviséd,<sup>\*</sup>  
 I saw Gower, that first garnished our English rude,  
 And Maister Chaucer, that nobly enterpriséd  
 How that our English might freshly be enewéd<sup>6</sup>;  
 The monk of Bury then after them ensué,  
 Dan' John Lydgate: these English poetis three,  
 As I imaginéd, repaired unto me,

Together in arms, as brethren embracéd;  
 Their apparel far passing beyond that I can tell;

<sup>1</sup>Poggio's *Facetiae*, then very popular.

<sup>2</sup>remedy.

<sup>3</sup>The *Speculum Majus* (1473) of Vicentius Bellovacensis.

<sup>4</sup>strifes?

<sup>5</sup>earnestly . . . looked.

<sup>6</sup>polished.

<sup>7</sup>i.e. Dominus.



With diamonds and rubies their tabards were traséd,  
None so rich stones in Turkey to sell;  
They wanted nothing but the laurell<sup>1</sup>;  
And of their bounty they made me goodly cheer,  
In manner and form as ye shall after hear.

MAISTER GOWER *to* SKELTON

• Brother Skelton, your endeavourment  
So have ye done, that meritoriously  
Ye have deserved to have an employment  
In our college above the starry sky,  
Because that ye increase and amplify  
The bruited<sup>2</sup> Britons of Brutus Albion,  
That well-nigh was lost when that we were gone.

POETA SKELTON *to* MAISTER GOWER

Maister Gower, I have nothing deserved  
To have so laudable a commendation:  
To you three this honour shall be reserved,  
Erecting unto your wise examination  
How all that I do is under reformation,  
For only the substance of that I intend  
Is glad to please, and loth to offend.

MAISTER CHAUCER *to* SKELTON

Counterweighing your busy dilligence  
Of that we began in the supplement,  
Enforcéd are we you to recompence,  
Of all our whole college by the agreement,  
That we shall bring you personally present  
Of noble Fame before the Queenés grace,  
In whose court apointed is your place.

<sup>1</sup>They were not poets laureate – like Skelton. <sup>2</sup>famed.

POETA SKELTON *answereth*

O noble Chaucer, whose polished eloquence  
 Our English rude so freshly hath set out,  
 That bound are we with all due reverence,  
 With all our strength that we can bring about,  
 To owe to you our service, and more if we might!  
 But what should I say? Ye wot what I intend,  
 Which glad am to please, and loth to offend.

MAISTER LYDGATE *to* SKELTON

So am I prevented of my brethren twain  
 In rendering to you thankés meritory,  
 That well-nigh nothing there doth remain  
 Wherewith to give you my regraciatory,  
 But that I 'point you to be protonotary  
 Of Fame's court, by all our whole assent  
 Advancéd by Pallas to laurel preferment.

POETA SKELTON *answereth*

So have ye me far passing my meritis extolléd,  
 Maister Lydgate, of your accustomed  
 Bounty, and so gloriously ye have enrolléd  
 My name, I know well, beyond that I am able;  
 That but if my workés thereto be agreeable,  
 I am else rebukéd of that I intend,  
 Which glad am to please, and loth to offend.

So finally, when they had shewéd their devise,  
 Under the form as I said tofore,  
 I made it strange, and drew back once or twice,  
 And ever they pressed on me more and more,  
 Till at the last they forcéd me so sore,  
 That with them I went where they would me bring,  
 Unto the pavilion where Pallas was sitting.

Dame Pallas commanded that they should me convey  
In the rich palace of the Queen of Fame;  
There shall he hear what she will to him say  
When he is called to answer to his name.  
A cry anon forthwith she made proclaim,  
All orators and poetis should thither go before,  
With all the press that there was less and more.

Forthwith, I say, thus wandering in my thought,  
How it was, or else within what hours,  
I cannot tell you, but that I was brought  
Into a palace with turretis and towers,  
Engalleried goodly with hallis and bowers,  
So curiously, so craftily, so cunningly wrought  
That all the world, I trow, an it were sought,

Such another there could no man find;  
Whereof partly I purpose to expound,  
Whiles it remaineth fresh in my mind.  
With turquoise and chrysolite enpavéd was the ground;  
Of beryl embosséd were the pillars round;  
Of elephantés teeth were the palace gates,  
Enlozengéd with many goodly plates

Of gold, entached<sup>1</sup> with many a precious stone;  
An hundred stepis mounting to the hall,  
One of jasper, another of whalés-bone;  
Of diamondis pointed was the rocky wall;  
The carpetis within and tapettis of pall<sup>2</sup>;  
The chambers hangéd with clothés of Arrase;  
Envaulted with rubies the vault was of this place.

Thus passéd we forth walking unto the pretory  
Where the postes were embullioned with sapphires Indy  
blue,

<sup>1</sup>inlaid.

<sup>2</sup>fine cloths.

Englazed glittering with many a clear story;  
 Jacinths and smaragdis out of the florth<sup>1</sup> they grew  
 Unto this place all poetis there did sue,  
 Wherein was set of Fame the noble Queen,  
 All other transcending, most richly beseen,

Under a glorious cloth of estate,  
 Fret all with orient pearlés of Garnate,  
 Encrowned as empress of all this worldly fate,  
 So royally, so richly, so passing ornate,  
 It was exceeding beyond the common rate.  
 This house envirown was a mile about;  
 If xii. were let in, xii. hundred stood without.

Then to this lady and sovereign of this palace  
 Of pursuivants<sup>2</sup> there presséd in with many a diverse tale;  
 Some were of Poyle,<sup>3</sup> and some were of Thrace,  
 Of Limerick, of Lorain, of Spain, of Portingale,  
 From Naples, from Novern, and from Rouncevale,  
 Some from Flanders, some from the sea-coast,<sup>4</sup>  
 Some from the main-land, some from the French host:

With,\* How doth the north? What tidings in the south?  
 The west is windy, the east is meetly weel!  
 It is hard to tell of every mannés mouth;  
 A slippery hold the tail is of an eel,  
 And he halteth often that hath a kiby<sup>4</sup> heel.  
 Some shewéd his safe-conduct, some shewéd his charter,  
 Some lookéd full smoothly, and had a false quarter;

With, sir, I pray you, a little time stand back,  
 And let me come in to deliver my letter!  
 Another told how shippés went to wrack;  
 There were many wordés smaller and greater,  
 With, I as good as thou! I'faith and no better!

<sup>1</sup>wall.<sup>2</sup>followers.<sup>3</sup>Apulia.<sup>4</sup>blistered.

Some came to tell truth, some came to lie,  
Some came to flatter, and some came to spy.

There were, I say, of all manner of sorts,  
Of Dartmouth, of Plymouth, of Portsmouth also;  
The burgesses and the bailiffs of the Cinque Ports,  
With, Now let me come! and, Now let me go!  
And all time wandered I thus to and fro,  
Till at the last these noble poetis three  
Unto me said, Lo, sir, now ye may see

Of this high court the daily business!  
From you must we, but not long to tarry.  
Lo, hither cometh a goodly mistress,  
Occupation, Famés registry,  
Which shall be to you a sovereign accessary,  
With singular pleasures to drive away the time,  
And we shall see you again ere it be prime<sup>1</sup>!

When they were passed and went forth on their way,  
This gentlewoman, that calléd was by name  
Occupation, in right goodly array,  
Came toward me, and smiléd half in game;  
I saw her smile, and I then did the same.  
With that on me she cast her goodly look;  
Under her arm, methought, she had a book.

#### OCCUPATION to SKELTON

Like as the lark, upon the summer's day,  
When Titan radiant burnisheth his beamis bright,  
Mounteth on high with her melodious lay,  
Of the sunshine engladed with the light,  
So am I surpriséd with pleasure and delight  
To see this hour now, that I may say  
How ye are welcome to this court of array! •

<sup>1</sup>Properly, the time between 6 and 9 a.m. •

Of your acquaintance I was in times past,  
 Of studious doctrine when at the port salu<sup>1</sup>  
 Ye first arrived, when broken was your mast  
 Of worldly trust; then did I you rescue;  
 Your storm-driven ship I repaired new,  
 So well entackled, what wind that ever blow,  
 No stormy tempest your barge shall overthrow!

Welcome to me as heartily as heart can think,  
 Welcome to me with all my whole desire!  
 And for my sake spare neither pen nor ink;  
 Be well assured I shall requite your hire,  
 Your name recounting beyond the land of Tyre,  
 From Sidony to the mount Olympian,  
 From Babel's Tower to the hillè Caspian.

SKELTON POETA *answereth*

I thanked her much of her most noble offer,  
 Affiancing her mine whole assurance,  
 For her pleasure to make a large proffer,  
 Imprinting her wordès in my remembrance,  
 To owe her my service with true perseverance.  
 Come on with me, she said, let us not stand!  
 And with that word she took me by the hand.

So passéd we forth into the foresaid place,  
 With such communication as came to our mind.  
 And then she said, Whiles we have time and space  
 To walk where we list, let us somewhat find  
 To pass the time with, but let us waste no wind,  
 For idle janglers have but little brain:  
 Words be swords, and hard to call again!

Into a field she brought me wide and large,  
 Enwalléd about with the stony flint,

<sup>1</sup>safe port, harbour.

Strongly embattled, much costious of charge:

To walk on this wall she bade I should not stint.

Go softly, she said, the stones be full glint!<sup>1</sup>

She went before, and bade me take good hold:

I saw a thousand gatès new and old.

Then questioned I her what those gatès meant;

Whereto she answeréd, and briefly me told,

How from the east unto the occident,

And from the south unto the north so cold,

These gates, she said, which that ye behold,

Be issues and ports from all manner of nations;

And seriously she shewéd me their denominations.

They had writing, some Greek, some Hebrew,

Some Roman letters, as I understood;

Some were old written, some were written new,

Some characters of Chaldy, some French was full good;

But one gate specially, whereas I stood,

Had graven in it of chalcedony a capital A.

What gate call ye this? And she said, Anglia.

The building thereof was passing commendable;

Whereon stood a leopard, crownéd with gold and stones,

Terrible of countenance and passing formidable,

As quickly touchéd<sup>2</sup> as it were flesh and bones,

As ghastly that glares, and grimly that groans,

As fiercely frowning as he had been fighting,

And with his former foot he shook forth this writing.

*Formidanda nimis Jovis ultima fulmina tollis:*

*Unguibys ire parat loca singula livida curvis*

*Quam modo per Phæbus nummos raptura Celæno;*

*Arma, lues. luctus, fel, vis, fraus, barbara tellus;*

*Mille modis erras odium tibi quaerere Martis:*

*Spreto spineto cedant saliumca roseto.<sup>3</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>slippery.

<sup>2</sup>Executed as much to the life.

<sup>3</sup>I cannot make anything of this.

Then I me leant, and looked over the wall:

Innumerable people pressed to every gate.

Shut were the gates; they might well knock and call,

And turn home again, for they came all too late.

I her demanded of them and their estate.<sup>1</sup>

Forsooth, quod she, they be hascardis and rébawdis,<sup>2</sup>

Dicers, carders, tumblers with gambawdis.<sup>3</sup>

Furtherers of love,<sup>4</sup> with bawdry acquainted,

Brainless blinkardis<sup>5</sup> that blow at the coal,

False forgers of money, for coinage attained,

Pope-holy hypocrites, as they were gold and whole,

Pole-hatchetis, that prate will at every ale-pole,<sup>6</sup>

Riot, reveller, railer, bribery, theft,

With other conditions that well might be left.

Some feign themselves fools, and would be calléd wise,

Some meddling spies, by craft to grope thy mind,

Some disdainous dawcocks<sup>7</sup> that all men despise,

False flatterers that fawn thee, and curs of kind

That speak fair before thee and shrewdly behind;

Hither they come crowding to get them a name,

But hailéd they be homeward with sorrow and shame!

With that I heard guns rush out at once,

Bowns, bowns, bowns!<sup>8</sup> that all they out cried;

It made some limp-leggéd and bruised their bones;

Some were made peevish,<sup>9</sup> porishly pink-eyed,

That ever more after by it they were espied;

And one was there, I wondered of his hap,

For a gun-stone, I say, had all to-jagged his cap:

Ragged and daggéd, and cunningly cut,

The blast of the brimstone blew away his brain;

<sup>1</sup>condition. <sup>2</sup>rascals . . . ribalds. <sup>3</sup>gambols. <sup>4</sup>pimps.

<sup>5</sup>sluggards. <sup>6</sup>Cronies that gossip round the ale-house sign.

<sup>7</sup>stuck-up ignoramuses. <sup>8</sup>i.e. the reports of the guns. <sup>9</sup>silly.



Mazéd as a March-hare, he ran like a scut!<sup>1</sup>

And, sir, among all methought I saw twain,  
The one was a tumbler, that afterwards again  
Of a dicer, a devil way, grew a gentleman,  
Pierce Prater the second, that quarrelis began;

With a pellet of peevishness they had such a stroke,  
That all the days of their life shall stick by their ribs!  
Foo, foisty bawdias! some smelléd of the smoke!  
I saw divers that were carried away thence in cribs,  
Dazing after dotterels, like drunkards that dribs.<sup>2</sup>  
These titivels with tampions were touchéd and tapped<sup>3</sup>;  
Much mischief, I hight you, among them there happed.

Sometime, as it seemeth, when the moon-light  
By means of a grisily endarkéd cloud  
Suddenly is eclipséd in the winter night,  
In like manner of wise a mist did us shrowd.  
But well may ye think I was nothing proud  
Of that adventure, which made me sore aghast.  
In darkness thus dwelt we, till at the last

The clouds began to clear, the mist rarified;  
In an herber<sup>4</sup> I saw, brought where I was,  
There birds on the briar sang on every side;  
With alleys ensanded<sup>5</sup> about in compass,  
The banks enturféd with singular solas,  
Enrailéd with rosers,<sup>6</sup> and vinés engrapéd;  
It was a new comfort of sorrowis escapéd.

In the midst of a conduit, that curiously was cast,  
With pipés of gold, engushing out streams;  
Of crystal the clearness these waters far past,  
Enswimming with roaches, barbellis, and breams,  
Whose scales ensilvered against the sun-beams

<sup>1</sup>hare.

<sup>2</sup>dribbles.

<sup>3</sup>I suppose: These stupid fellows had stoppers put in their mouths.

<sup>4</sup>enclosed garden.

<sup>5</sup>sanded walks.

<sup>6</sup>rose-bushes.

Englistened, that joyous it was to behold.  
Then furthermore about me my sight I revol'd,<sup>1</sup>

Where I saw growing a goodly laurel tree,  
Enverdured with leaves continually green;  
Above in the top a bird of Araby  
Men call a phoenix, her wings between  
She beat up a fire with the sparks full keen;  
With branches and boughs of the sweet olive,  
Whose fragrant flower was chief preservative

Against all infections with rancour inflaméd,  
Against all baratous bruises of old,  
It passéd all balmes that ever were naméd,  
Or gums of Araby so dearly that be sold.  
There blew in that garden a soft pipling cold  
Enbreathing of Zephyrus with his pleasant wind;  
All fruits and flowers grew there in their kind.

Dryads there dancéd upon that goodly soil,  
With the Nine Muses, Pierides by name;  
Phyllis and Testalis, their tresses with oil  
Were newly enbibéd<sup>2</sup>; and round about the same  
Green tree of laurel much solacious<sup>3</sup> game  
They made, with chapelets and garlands green;  
And foremost of all Dame Flora, the queen

Of summer, so formally she footed the dance;  
There Cyntheus sat twinkling upon his harp-strings;  
And Iopas<sup>4</sup> his instrument did advance,<sup>5</sup>  
The poemés and stories, ancient inbrings<sup>6</sup>  
Of Atlas astrology, and many noble things,  
Of wandering of the moon, the course of the sun,  
Of men and of beasts, and whereof they begun,

<sup>1</sup>revolved, turned.

<sup>2</sup>anointed.

<sup>3</sup>pleasant.

<sup>4</sup>the Carthaginian bard.

<sup>5</sup>Here, and for the next two stanzas, cf. Virgil, *Æneid*, i. 740.

<sup>6</sup>doctrines(?).

What thing occasionéd the showers of rain,  
 Of fire elementar in his supreme sphere,  
 And of that pole arctic which doth remain  
 Behind the tail of Ursa so clear;  
 Of Pliades he preached with their drowsy chere,<sup>1</sup>  
 Emoisturéd with misling and aye dropping eye,  
 And where the two Triones<sup>2</sup> a man should espy,

And of the winter days that hie them so fast,  
 And of the winter nights that tarry so long,  
 And of the summer days so long that do last,  
 And of their short nights; he brought in his song  
 How wrong was no right, and right was no wrong:  
 There was countering of carols in metre and verse  
 So many, that long it were to rehearse.

OCCUPATION *to* SKELTON

How say ye? is this after your appetite?  
 May this content you and your merry mind?  
 Here dwelleth pleasure,<sup>3</sup> with lust<sup>3</sup> and delight<sup>3</sup>;  
 Continual comfort here ye may find,  
 Of wealth and solace no thing left behind;  
 All thing convenáble<sup>4</sup> here is contrived,  
 Wherewith your spirités may be revivéd.

POETA SKELTON *answereth*

Questionless no doubt of that ye say;  
 Jupiter himself this life might endure;  
 This joy exceedeth all worldly sport and play;  
 Paradise this place is of singular pleasure:  
 O well were him that hereof might be sure,  
 And here to inhabit and aye for to dwell!  
 But, goodly mistress, one thing ye me tell.

<sup>1</sup>aspect, looks.<sup>2</sup>i.e. Ursa major and minor, the Wain.<sup>3</sup>All synonymous words, of course.<sup>4</sup>meet, fit.

OCCUPATION *to* SKELTON

Of your demand shew me the content,  
 What it is, and where upon it stands;  
 And if there be in it any thing meant,  
 Whereof the answer resteth in my hands,  
 It shall be loosed full soon out of the bands  
 Of scrupulous doubt; wherefore your mind discharge,  
 And of your will the plainness shew at large.

POETA SKELTON *answereth*

I thank you, goodly mistress, to me most benign,  
 That of your bounty so well have me assuréd;  
 But my request is not so great a thing  
 That I ne force what though it be discouréd;<sup>1</sup>  
 I am not wounded but that I may be curéd;  
 I am not laden of liderness with lumps;<sup>2</sup>  
 As dazéd dotardis that dream in their dumps.

OCCUPATION *to* SKELTON

Now what ye mean, I trow I conject;  
 God give you good year, ye make me to smile!  
 Now, by your faith, is not this the effect  
 Of your question ye make all this while,  
 To understand who dwelleth in yond pile,  
 And what blunderer is yonder that played diddle diddle?  
 He findeth false measures out of his fond fiddle.

*Interpolata, que industriosum postulat interpretem, satira in  
 vatis adversarium.\**

<sup>1</sup>That I do not care though it be discovered.

<sup>2</sup>i.e. I am not laden with lumps of sluggishness.

<sup>3</sup>An interpolated satire against the poet's adversary, which demands an industrious interpreter. (It certainly does! I leave the reader to make what he can of it.)

*Tressis agasonis species prior, altera Davi:  
 Aucupium culicis, limis dum torquet ocellum,  
 Concipit, aligeras rapit, appetit, aspice, muscas!  
 Maia quaeque fovet, fovet aut que Jupiter, aut quae  
 Frigida Saturnus, Sol, Mars, Venus, algida Luna,  
 Si tibi contingat verbo aut committere scripto,  
 Quam sibi mox tacita audant praecordia culpa!  
 Hinc ruit in flammis, stimulans hunc urget et illum,  
 Invocat ad rixas, vanos tamen excitat ignes,  
 Labra movens tacitus, rumpantur ut ilia Codro.<sup>1</sup>*

17. 4. 7. 2. 17. 5. 18.

18. 19. 1. 19. 8. 5. 12.<sup>2</sup>

His name for to know if that ye list,  
 Envious Rancour truëly he hight:  
 Beware of him, I warn you; for an ye wist  
 How dangerous it were to stand in his light,  
 Ye would not deal with him, though that ye might!  
 For by his devilish drift and graceless provision  
 An whole realm he is able to set at devision:

<sup>1</sup>The first kind is a twopenny halfpenny groom [or lackey], the second a Davus [i.e. a slave]: He undertakes the watching of the gnat, while he turns his eye aslant, and, look, he seizes, snatches at, the winged flies! Whatever Maia cherishes, or Jupiter, or cold Saturn, Sun, Mars, Venus, and the chill Moon, if it happens to you to commit it to word or writing, how soon the heart sweats to itself with silent guilt! Hence he rushes into flames, stirs up this one and that, invokes to strife, yet kindles the ineffectual fires, moving the lips in silence – let Codrus [a poet hostile to Virgil] burst his lungs!

<sup>2</sup>Mr. Richard Hughes, in his edition of *Poems* by John Skelton (Heinemann, 1924), has interpreted these figures as ROGERUS STATHAM, thus giving a clue to the personality of “the poet’s adversary.” (See lines to Mistress Gertrude Statham further on.) Yet the “groom” may refer to Stephen Hawes, who was Groom of the Chamber under Henry VII, and who may also be referred to here as “Codrus,” as a poet who harboured “envious rancour” for Skelton.

For when he speaketh fairest, then thinketh he most ill;  
 Full gloriously can he glose, thy mind for to feel;  
 He will set men a-fighting, and sit himself still,  
 And smirk, like a smithy cur, at sparkes of steel;  
 He can never leave work whiles it is weel;  
 To tell all his touches it were too great wonder;  
 The devil of hell and he be seldom assunder!

Thus talking we went in at a postern gate;  
 Turning on the right hand, by a winding stair,  
 She brought me to a goodly chamber of estate,  
 Where the noble Countess of Surrey<sup>1</sup> in a chair  
 Sat honourably, to whom did repair  
 Of ladies a bevy with all due reverence:  
 Sit down, fair ladies, and do your diligence!

Come forth, gentlewomen, I pray you! she said,  
 I have contrived for you a goodly wark!  
 And who can work best now shall be assayed.  
 A coronal of laurel with verdures light and dark  
 I have devised for Skelton, my clerk;  
 For to his service I have such regard  
 That of our bounty we will him reward.

For of all ladies he hath the library,  
 Their names recounting in the court of Fame;  
 Of all gentlewomen he hath the scrutiny,  
 In Fame's court reporting the same;  
 For yet of women he never said shame,  
 But if they were counterfeits, that women them call,  
 That list of their lewdness<sup>2</sup> with him for to brawl.

With that the tappetis and carpetis were laid,  
 Whereon these ladies softly might rest,

<sup>1</sup>Wife of Lord Thomas Howard and mother of the poet,  
 Henry Howard, to whom Skelton was tutor.

<sup>2</sup>impudence.

The sampler to sew on, the laces to embraid;  
 To weave in the stole some were full prest,<sup>1</sup>  
 With sleys,<sup>2</sup> with tavellis,<sup>3</sup> with hiddles<sup>4</sup> well drest;  
 The frame was brought forth with his weaving pin:  
 God give them good speed their work to begin!

Some to embroider put them in prease,<sup>5</sup>  
 Well guiding their glowton<sup>6</sup> to keep straight their silk,  
 Some pirling<sup>7</sup> of gold their work to increase  
 With fingers small, and handes white as milk;  
 With, Reach me the skein of tuly<sup>8</sup> silk!  
 And, Wind me that bottom of such an hue,  
 Green, red, tawny, white, black, purple, and blue.

Of broken works wrought many a goodly thing,  
 In casting, in turning, in flourishing of flowers,  
 With burres rough and bottons<sup>9</sup> surfeling,<sup>10</sup>  
 In needle-work raising birdes in bowers,  
 With virtue enbusied all times and hours;  
 And truly of their bounty thus were they bent  
 To work me this chaplet by good advisement.

## OCCUPATION to SKELTON

Behold and see in your advertisement  
 How these ladies and gentlewomen all  
 For your pleasure do their endeavourment,  
 And for your sake how fast to work they fall:  
 To your remembrance wherefore ye must call  
 In goodly wordes pleasantly comprised,  
 That for them some goodly conceit be deviséd,

<sup>1</sup>ready.      <sup>2</sup>weaver's reeds.      <sup>3</sup>silk-weaving instruments.

<sup>4</sup>The small cords through which the warp is passed in a loom,  
 after going through the reed.

<sup>5</sup>applied themselves.

<sup>6</sup>needle.

<sup>7</sup>winding.

<sup>8</sup>deep red.

<sup>9</sup>buds.

<sup>10</sup>embroidering.

With proper captations<sup>1</sup> of benevolence,  
 Ornately polished after your faculty,  
 Sith ye must needs aforce<sup>2</sup> it by pretence  
 Of your profession unto humanity,<sup>3</sup>  
 Commencing your process after their degree,  
 To each of them rendering thanks commendable,  
 With sentence fructuous and termès covenable.<sup>4</sup>

## POETA SKELTON

Advancing myself some thankè to deserve,  
 I me determinéd for to sharp my pen,  
 Devoutly arrecting<sup>5</sup> my prayer to Minerve,  
 She to vouchsafe me to inform and ken;  
 To Mercury also heartily prayed I then,  
 Me to support, to help, and to assist,  
 To guide and to govern my dreadful trembling fist.

As a mariner that amazéd is in a stormy rage,  
 Hardly bested and driven is to hope  
 Of that the tempestuous wind will assuage,  
 In trust whereof comfort his heart doth grope,  
 From the ancor he cutteth the cable-rope,  
 Commiteth all to God, and letteth his ship ride,  
 So I beseech Jesu now to be my guide!

*To the right noble* COUNTESS OF SURREY

After all duly ordered obeisance,  
 In humble wise as lowly as I may,  
 Unto you, madam, I make reconusance<sup>6</sup>!  
 My life enduring I shall write and say,  
 Recount, report, rehearse without delay  
 The passing bounty of your noble estate,  
 Of honour and worship which hath the former date.

<sup>1</sup>courship.    <sup>2</sup>attempt.    <sup>3</sup>literature.    <sup>4</sup>meet.  
<sup>5</sup>raising.    <sup>6</sup>acknowledgement.



Like to Argia by just resemblance,  
The noble wife of Polynices king;  
Prudent Rebecca, of whom remembrance  
The Bible maketh; with whose chaste living  
Your noble demeanour is counterweighing,  
Whose passing bounty, and right noble estate,  
Of honour and worship it hath the former date.

The noble Pamphila, queen of the Greekè's land,  
Habiliments royal found out industriously;  
Thamer<sup>1</sup> also wrought with her goodly hand  
Many devices passing curiously;  
Whom ye represent and exemplify,  
Whose passing bounty, and right noble estate,  
Of honour and worship it hath the former date.

As Dame Thamaris, which took the king of Perce,  
Cyrus by name, as writeth the story;  
Dame Agrippina also I may rehearse  
Of gentle corage and perfect memory;  
So shall your name endure perpetually,  
Whose passing bounty, and right noble estate,  
Of honour and worship it hath the former date.

*To my lady ELIZABETH HOWARD*

To be your remembrancer, madam, I am bound,  
Like to Irene, maidenly of port,  
Of virtue and conning the well and perfect ground;  
Whom Dame Nature, as well I may report,  
Hath freshly embeautied with many a goodly sort  
Of womanly features, whose flourishing tender age  
Is lusty to look on, pleasant, demure, and sage.

<sup>1</sup>Timarete, daughter to Mycon, the painter. (See Pliny, *Nat. Hist.*)

## THE GARLAND OF LAUREL

Good Criseyde, fairer than Polixene,  
 For to enliven Pandarus' appetite;  
 Troilus, I trow, if that he had you seen,  
 In you he would have set his whole delight:  
 Of all your beauty I suffice not to write!  
 But, as I said, your flourishing tender age  
 Is lusty to look on, pleasant, demure, and sage.

*To my lady MIRREL HOWARD*

My little lady I may not leave behind,  
 But do her service needs now I must;  
 Benign, courteous, of gentle heart and mind,  
 Whom Fortune and Fate plainly have dicust<sup>1</sup>  
 Long to enjoy pleasure, delight, and lust:  
 The embudded blossoms of roses red of hue,  
 With lillies white your beauty doth renew.

Compare you I may to Cydippe, the maid,  
 That of Acontius, when she found the bill<sup>2</sup>  
 In her bosom, lord, how she was afraid!  
 The ruddy shame-facedness in her visage fill,  
 Which manner of abashment became her not ill!  
 Right so, madam, the roses red of hue  
 With lillies white your beauty doth renew.

*To my lady ANNE DAKERS of the South*

Zeuxis that empictured fair Elene the queen,  
 You to devise his craft were to seek;  
 And if Apelles your countenance had seen,  
 Of portraiture which was the famous Greek,  
 He could not devise the least point of your cheek!  
 Princess of youth, and flower of goodly port,  
 Virtue, conning, solace, pleasure, comfort.

<sup>1</sup>determined.<sup>2</sup>*billet-doux*.

Paregal<sup>1</sup> in honour unto Penelope,  
 That for her truth is in remembrance had;  
 Fair Dijanira surmounting in beauty;  
 Demure Diana womanly and sad,  
 Whose lusty looks make heavy heartis glad!  
 Princess of youth, and flower of goodly port,  
 Virtue, conning, solace, pleasure, comfort.

To MISTRESS MARGERY WENTWORTH

With margerain<sup>2</sup> gentle,  
 The flower of goodlihead,<sup>3</sup>  
 Embroidered the mantle  
 Is of your maidenhead.  
 Plainly I cannot glose;  
 Ye be, as I devine,  
 The pretty primrose,  
 The goodly columbine.  
 With margerain gentle,  
 The flower of goodlihead,  
 Embroidered the mantle  
 Is of your maidenhead.  
 Benign, courteous, and meek,  
 With wordès well devised;  
 In you, who list to seek,  
 Be virtues well comprised.  
 With margerain gentle,  
 The flower of goodlihead,  
 Embroidered the mantle  
 Is of your maidenhead.

To MISTRESS MARGARET TYLNEY

I you assure,  
 Full well I know

<sup>1</sup>Quite equal.

<sup>2</sup>marjoram.

<sup>3</sup>goodliness.

My busy cure<sup>1</sup>  
 To you I owe;  
 Humbly and low  
 Commending me  
 To your bountie.

As Machareus  
 Fair Canace,<sup>2</sup>  
 So I, ywis,  
 Endeavour me  
 Your name to see  
 It be enrolled,  
 Written with gold.

Phædra ye may  
 Well represent;  
 Intentive aye  
 And diligent,  
 No time mispent;  
 Wherefore delight  
 I have to write

Of Margarite,  
 Pearl orient,  
 Lode-star of light,  
 Much relucient;  
 Madam regent  
 I may you call  
 Of virtues all.

To MISTRESS JANE BLENNERHASSET

What though my pen wax faint,  
 And hath small lust to paint?  
 Yet shall there no restraint

<sup>1</sup>care.

<sup>2</sup>Their tale told by Gower, *Conf. Am.*

Cause me to cease,  
Among this prese,<sup>1</sup>  
For to increase  
Your goodly name.

I will myself apply,  
Trust me, intently,  
You for to stellafy;  
And so observe  
That ye ne swerve  
For to deserve  
Immortal fame.

Sith Mistress Jane Hasset  
Small flowers helped to set  
In my goodly chapelet,  
Therefore I render of her the memory  
Unto the legend of far Laodamy.

*To MISTRESS ISABEL PENNELL*

By Saint Mary, my lady,  
Your mammy and your daddy  
Brought forth a goodly baby!

My maiden Isabel,  
Reflaring rosabel,<sup>2</sup>  
The fragrant camomel;  
The ruddy rosary,<sup>3</sup>  
The sovereign rosemary,  
The pretty strawberry;  
The columbine, the nept,<sup>4</sup>  
The gillyflower well set,  
The proper violet:

<sup>1</sup>company.

<sup>2</sup>Odorous fair-rose.

<sup>3</sup>rose-bush.

<sup>4</sup>catmint.

Ennewéd<sup>1</sup> your colour  
 Is like the daisy flower  
 After the April shower;  
 Star of the morrow gray,  
 The blossom on the spray,  
 The freshest flower of May;  
 Maidenly demure,  
 Of womanhood the lure;  
 Wherefore I make you sure  
 It were an heavenly health,  
 It were an endless wealth,  
 A life for God himself,  
 To hear this nightingale  
 Among the birdes smale  
 Warbeling in the vale,  
 Dug, dug,  
 Jug, jug,  
 Good year and good luck,  
 With chuck, chuck, chuck, chuck!

To MISTRESS MARGARET HUSSEY

Merry Margaret,  
 As midsummer flower,  
 Gentle as falcon  
 Or hawk of the tower:  
 With solace and gladness,  
 Much mirth and no madness,  
 All good and no badness;  
 So joyously,  
 So maidenly,  
 So womanly  
 Her demeaning  
 In every thing,  
 Far, far passing  
 That I can indite,  
 Or suffice to write

<sup>1</sup>Renewed.

Of Merry Margaret  
     As midsummer flower,  
 Gentle as falcon  
 Or hawk of the tower.  
     As patient and still  
 And as full of good will  
 As fair Isaphill,<sup>1</sup>  
 Coliander,  
 Sweet pomander,<sup>2</sup>  
 Good Cassander,<sup>3</sup>  
 Steadfast of thought,  
 Well made, well wrought,  
 Far may be sought  
 Ere that he can find  
 So courteous, so kind  
 As Merry Margaret,  
     This midsummer flower,  
 Gentle as falcon  
 Or hawk of the tower.

• *To MISTRESS GERTRUDE STATHAM*

Though ye were hard-hearted,  
 And I with you thwarted  
 With wordès that smarted,  
     Yet now doubtless ye give me cause  
     To write of you this goodly clause,  
 Mistress Gertrude,  
     With womanhood endued,  
     With virtue well renewed.  
 I will that ye shall be  
 In all benignity  
 Like to Dame Pasiphæ;  
     For now doubtless ye give me cause  
     To write of you this goodly clause,  
 Mistress Gertrude,  
     With womanhood endued,

<sup>1</sup>Hypsipyle.

<sup>2</sup>ball of perfume.

<sup>3</sup>Cassandra.

## THE GARLAND OF LAUREL

With virtue well renewed.  
 Partly by your counsel,  
 Garnished with laurel  
 Was my fresh coronal;  
 Wherefore doubtless ye give me cause  
 To write of you this goodly clause,  
 Mistress Gertrude,  
 With womanhood endued,  
 With virtue well renewed.

## To MISTRESS ISABEL KNIGHT

But if I should requite your kindness,  
 Else say ye might  
 That in me were great blindness  
 I for to be so mindless,  
 And could not write  
 Of Isabel Knight.

It is not my custom nor my guise  
 To leave behind  
 Her that is both womanly and wise,<sup>1</sup>  
 And specially which glad was to devise  
 The means to find  
 To please my mind

In helping to work my laurel green  
 With silk and gold:  
 Galathea, the maid well beseen,<sup>1</sup>  
 Was never half so fair, as I ween,  
 Which was extoll'd  
 A thousand fold

By Maro, the Mantuan prudent,<sup>2</sup>  
 Who list to read!  
 But, an I had leisure competent,  
 I could shew you such a precedent  
 In very deed  
 How ye exceed.

<sup>1</sup> fair to see.<sup>2</sup> i.e. Virgil. (See *Ecl.* i. and iii.)



OCCUPATION *to* SKELTON

Withdraw your hand, the time passes fast:  
Set on your head this laurel which is wrought;  
Hear you not Æolus for you bloweth a blast?  
I dare well say that ye and I be sought.  
Make no delay, for now ye must be brought  
Before my lady's grace, the Queen of Fame,  
Where ye must briefly answer to your name.

## SKELTON POETA

Casting my sight the chamber about,  
To see how duly each thing in order was,  
Toward the door, as we were coming out,  
I saw Maister Newton sit with his compass,  
His plummet, his pencil, his spectacles of glass,  
Devising in picture, by his industrious wit,  
Of my laurel the process every whit.

Fortwith upon this, as it were in a thought,  
Gower, Chaucer, Lydgate, these three  
Before remembered, me courteously brought  
Into that place whereas they left me,  
Where all the said poets sat in their degree.  
But when they saw my laurel, richly wrought,  
All other beside were counterfeit they thought

In comparison of that which I wear!  
Some praised the pearl, some the stones bright:  
Well was him that thereupon might stare!  
• Of this work they had so great delight:  
The silk, the gold, the floweris fresh to sight,  
They said my laurel was the goodliest  
That ever they saw, and wrought it was the best.

In her estate there sat the noble Queen  
Of Fame. Perceiving how that I was come,

She wonderéd, methought, at my laurel green;  
 She lookéd haughty, and gave on me a glum:  
 There was among them no word then but mum!  
 For each man harkened what she would to me say;  
 Whereof in substance I brought this away.

*The QUEEN OF FAME to SKELTON*

My friend, sith ye are before us here present,  
 To answer unto this noble audience,  
 Of that shall be resound ye must be content;  
 And, for as much as by the high pretence  
 That ye have now thorough pre-eminence  
 Of laureate triumph, your place is here reservéd,  
 We will understand how ye have it deservéd.

*SKELTON POETA to the QUEEN OF FAME*

Right high and mighty princess of estate,  
 In famous glory all other transcending,  
 Of your bounty the accustomable rate  
 Hath been full often and yet is entending  
 To all that to reason is condescending,  
 But if hasty credence, by maintenance of might,  
 Fortune to stand between you and the light.

But such evidence I think for to induce,  
 As so largely to lay for mine indemnity,  
 That I trust to make mine excuse  
 Of what charge soever ye lay against me;  
 For of my bookis part ye shall see,  
 Which in your records, I know well, be enrolled,  
 And so Occupation, your registrar, me told.

Forthwith she commanded I should take my place;  
 Calliope pointed me where I should sit.

With that, Occupation presséd in apace;  
 Be merry, she said, be not afeard a whit,  
 Your discharge here under mine arm is it!  
 So then commanded she was upon this  
 To shew her book, and she said, Here it is.

*The* QUEEN OF FAME *to* OCCUPATION

Your book of remembrance we will now that ye read;  
 If any records in number can be found  
 What Skelton hath compiléd and written indeed,  
 Rehearsing by order, and what is the ground,  
 Let see now for him how ye can expound;  
 For in our court, ye wot well, his name cannot rise  
 But if he write oftener than once or twice.

POETA SKELTON

With that of the book loosened were the clasps:  
 The margent was illuminéd all with golden rails  
 And byse,<sup>1</sup> empicturéd with gressops<sup>2</sup> and wasps,  
 With butterflies and fresh<sup>3</sup> peacock tails,  
 Enfloréd with floweris and slimy snails;  
 Envived picturis well touchéd and quickly;  
 It would have made a man whole that had been right sickly

To behold how it was garnishéd and bound,  
 Encoveréd over with gold of tissue fine;  
 The clasps and bullions<sup>4</sup> were worth a thousand pound;  
 With balasses<sup>5</sup> and carbuncles the borders did shine;  
 With *aurum musicum*<sup>6</sup> every other line  
 Was written. And so she did her speed,  
 Occupation, immediately to read.

<sup>1</sup>azure.

<sup>2</sup>grass-hoppers.

<sup>3</sup>gay.

<sup>4</sup>studs.

<sup>5</sup>rubies, found by Marco Polo in Balasham.

<sup>6</sup>mosaic gold.

OCCUPATION *readeth and expoundeth some part of SKELTON's books and ballads with ditties of pleasure, inasmuch as it were too long a process to rehearse all by name that he hath compiled, etc.*

Of your orator and poet laureate  
 Of England, his workis here they begin!  
*In primis* the Book of Honourous Estate;  
 Item, the Book how men should flee sin;  
 Item, Royal Demeanance worship to win;  
 Item, the Book to speak well and be still;  
 Item, to learn you to die when ye will<sup>1</sup>;

Of Virtue also the sovereign interlude;  
 The Book of the Rosiar<sup>2</sup>; Prince Arthur's Creation;  
 The False Faith that now goeth, which daily is renewed;  
 Item, his Dialogues of Imagination;  
 Item, Automedon of Love's Meditation;  
 Item, New Grammar in English compiled;  
 Item, Bouge of Court, where Drede was beguiléd;

His comedy, Achademios calléd by name;  
 Of Tully's Familiars the translation<sup>3</sup>;  
 Item, Good Advertisement, that brainless doth blame;  
 The Recule against Gaguin of the French nation;  
 Item, the Popinjay,<sup>4</sup> that hath in commendation  
 Ladies and gentlewomen such as deservéd,  
 And such as be counterfeits they be reservéd;

And of Sovereignty a noble pamphlet;  
 And of Magnificence a notable matter,

<sup>1</sup>A version, probably, of the same piece translated from the Latin by Caxton: *A lityle treatise, short and abridged, spekyng of the arte and crafte to knowe well to dye . . .* (1490).

<sup>2</sup>i.e. *A Laud and Praise made for our Sovereign Lord the King*. (See p. 29.)

<sup>3</sup>Praised in Caxton's preface to *The Boke of Eneydos*, 1490.

<sup>4</sup>*Speak, Parrot* (I suppose).

How Counterfeit Countenance of the new jet<sup>1</sup>  
 With Crafty Conveyance doth smatter and flatter,  
 And Cloaked Collusion is brought in to clatter  
 With Courtly Abusion; who printeth it well in mind  
 Much doubleness of the world therein may find;

Of Mannerly Maistress Margery Milk and Ale,  
 To her he wrote many matters of mirth;  
 Yet, though I say it, thereby lieth a tale,  
 For Margery winched,<sup>2</sup> and brake her hinder-girth;  
 Lor, how she made much of her gentle birth!  
 With, Gingerly,<sup>3</sup> go gingerly! her tail was made of hay;  
 Go she never so gingerly, her honesty is gone away!

Hard to make ought of that is naked nought;  
 This fustian<sup>4</sup> mistress and this giggish gase,<sup>5</sup>  
 Wonder is to write what wrenches<sup>6</sup> she wrought,  
 To face out her folly with a midsummer mase<sup>7</sup>!  
 With pitch she patchéd her pitcher should not crase<sup>8</sup>;  
 It may well rhyme, but shrewdly it doth accord,  
 To pick out honesty of such a potshord!

*Patet per versus.*

*Hinc puer hic natus: vir conjugis hinc spoliatus  
 Fure thori; est foetus Deli de sanguine cretus;  
 Hinc magis extollo, quod erit puer alter Apollo;  
 Si quaeris qualis? meretrix castissima talis;*

*Et ralis, et ralis et reliqualis.*

A good herring of these old tails;  
 Find no more such from Wanfleet to Walès!

*Et reliquae omeliae de diversis tractatibus.*

Of my lady's grace at the contemplation,<sup>9</sup>  
 Out of French into English prose,

<sup>1</sup>fashion.

<sup>2</sup>kicked.

<sup>3</sup>Carefully.

<sup>4</sup>vulgar.

<sup>5</sup>silly goose.

<sup>6</sup>ruses.

<sup>7</sup>a mad fancy.

<sup>8</sup>that it should not break.

<sup>9</sup>command.

Of Man's Life the Peregrination,  
 He did translate, interpret, and disclose;  
 The Treatise of Triumphis of the Red Rose,  
 Wherein many stories are briefly contained  
 That unremembered long time remained;

The Duke of York's creancer<sup>1</sup> when Skelton was,  
 Now Henry the Eight, King of England,  
 A treatise he deviséd and brought it to pass,  
 Called *Speculum Principis*, to bear in his hand,  
 Therein to read, and to understand  
 All the demeanour of princely estate,  
 To be our King, of God preordinate:

Also the Tunning of Elinor Rumming,  
 With Colin Clout, John Ive,<sup>2</sup> with joforth<sup>3</sup> Jack!  
 To make such trifles it asketh some conning,  
 In honest mirth parde requireth no lack;  
 The white appeareth the better for the black,  
 After conveyance<sup>4</sup> as the world goes,  
 It is no folly to use the Welshman's hose<sup>5</sup>;

The umbles<sup>6</sup> of venison, the bottle of wine,  
 To fair Mistress Anne<sup>7</sup> that should have been sent,  
 He wrote thereof many a pretty line,  
 Where it became, and whither it went,  
 And how that it was wantonly spent;  
 The Ballad also of the Mustard Tart,  
 Such problems to paint it 'longeth to his art;

Of one Adam all a knave, late dead and gone, —  
*Dormiat in pace*,<sup>8</sup> like a dormouse! —  
 He wrote an Épitaph for his grave-stone,  
 With wordés devout and sentence agerdouse,<sup>9</sup>  
 For he was ever against Goddis house,

<sup>1</sup>tutor.      <sup>2</sup>A heretic, *temp.* Edward IV.      <sup>3</sup>gee-up!

<sup>4</sup>dishonesty.      <sup>5</sup>i.e. equivocation.      <sup>6</sup>entrails.

<sup>7</sup>See ballad *Woman hood, wanton, ye want.*

<sup>8</sup>He sleeps in peace.      <sup>9</sup>severe. (See p. 477.)

All his delight was to brawl and to bark  
Against Holy Church, the priest, and the clerk.

Of Philip Sparrow, the lamentable fate,  
The doleful destiny, the careful chance,  
Devised by Skelton after the funeral rate;  
Yet some there be therewith that take grievance,  
And grudge thereat with frowning countenance;  
But what of that! hard is it to please all men;  
Who list amend it, let him set to his pen!

For the guise nowadays  
Of some jangling jays  
Is to discommend  
That they cannot amend,  
Though they would spend  
All the wits they have.

What ails them to deprave  
Philip Sparrow's grave?  
His *Dirige*,<sup>1</sup> her Commendation  
Can be no derogation,  
But mirth and consolation,  
Made by protestation,  
No man to miscontent  
With Philip's interment.

Alas, the goodly maid,  
Why should she be afraid?  
Why should she take shame  
That her goodly name,  
Honourably reported,  
Should be set and sorted,  
To be matriculate  
With ladies of estate?

I conjure thee, Philip Sparrow,  
By Hercules that hell did harrow,  
And with a venomous arrow

<sup>1</sup>i.e. dirge.

Slew the Epidaurs,  
One of the Centaurs,  
Or Onocentaurs,  
Or Hippocentaurs;  
By whose might and main  
An hart was slain  
With hornés twain  
Of glittering gold;  
And of the apples of gold  
Of Hesperides withhold,  
And with a dragon kept  
That nevermore slept,  
By martial strength  
He won at length;  
And slew Geryon  
With three bodies in one;  
With mighty courage  
Adaunted the rage  
Of a lion savage;  
Of Diomedes stable  
He brought out a rabble  
Of coursers and rounces<sup>1</sup>  
With leapés and bounces;  
And with mighty lugging,  
Wrestling and tugging,  
He pluckéd the bull  
By the hornéd skull,  
And offered to Cornucopia –  
And so forth *per cetera*!

Also by Hecate's bower  
In Pluto's ghastly tower;  
By the ugly Eumenides,  
That never have rest nor ease;  
By the venomous serpent  
That in hell is never brent,  
In Lerna the Greekis fen

<sup>1</sup>hacks.



That was engendered then;  
By Chimera's flames,  
And all the deadly names  
Of infernal postè,<sup>1</sup>  
Where soulès fry and roastè;  
By the Stygian flood,  
And the streamès wood,<sup>2</sup>  
Of Cocytus' bottomless well;  
By the ferryman of hell,  
Charon with his beard hoar,  
That roweth with a rude oar,  
And with his frownséd foretop  
Guideth his boat with a prop;  
I conjure Philip, and call,  
In the name of King Saul,  
*Primo Regis* express,  
He bade the Pythoness  
To witch-craft her to 'dress,  
And by her abusions,  
And damnable illusions,  
And marvelous conclusions,  
And by her superstitions,  
Of wonderful conditions,  
She raised up in that stead  
Samuel that was dead;  
But whether it were so,  
He were *idem in numero*  
The self-same Samuel,  
Howbeit to Saul he did tell  
The Philistines should him ascry,<sup>3</sup>  
And the next day he should die,  
I will myself discharge  
To lettered men at large!  
But, Philip, I conjure thee  
Now by these namès three,  
Diana in the woodès green,

<sup>1</sup>power.<sup>2</sup>wild.<sup>3</sup>assail.

Luna that so bright doth sheen,  
 Prosperina in hell,  
 That thou shortly tell,  
 And shew now unto me  
 What the cause may be  
 Of this perplexitie!

*Inferias, Philippe, tuas Scroupe pulchra Joanna  
 Instante petit: cur nostri carminis illam  
 Nunc pudet? est sero; minor est infamia vero.*<sup>1</sup>

Then such that have disdainéd,  
 And of this work complainéd,  
 I pray God they be painéd  
 No worse than is containéd  
 In verses two and three  
 That follow as ye may see:  
*Luride, cur, livor, volucris pia funera damnas?  
 Talia te rapiunt rapiunt quae fata volucrem!  
 Est tamen invidia mors tibi continua.*<sup>2</sup>

The grunting and the groining of the gronning swine<sup>3</sup>;  
 Also the mourning of the maple-root;  
 How the green coverlet suffered great pine,<sup>4</sup>  
 When the fly-net was set for to catch a coot,  
 Struck one with a bird-bolt<sup>5</sup> to the heart-root;  
 Also a devout Prayer to Moses' horns,  
 Metrified merrily, mingléd with scorns;

Of pageantès<sup>6</sup> that were played in Joyous Guard;  
 He wrote of a mew's<sup>7</sup> through a mud wall;

<sup>1</sup>Philip, your obsequies the fair Joanna ardently longed for: why is she now ashamed of our song? It is too late; shame is less than truth.

<sup>2</sup>Why, green Envy, do you condemn the sacred funeral rites of the bird? May the fate which overtook the bird seize upon thee! Yet is malice a perpetual death to thee.

<sup>3</sup>*Against venomous tongues* (perhaps).

<sup>4</sup>pain.

<sup>5</sup>a blunt arrow used to kill birds.

<sup>6</sup>pranks.

<sup>7</sup>opening.

How a doe came tripping in at the rear ward,  
 But, lord, how the parker<sup>1</sup> was wroth withall! •  
 And of Castle Angel<sup>2</sup> the fenestrall,  
 Glittering and glistening and gloriously glazed,  
 It made some men's eyen dazzled and dazed;

The Repeat<sup>3</sup> of the Recule of Rosamondis bower,  
 Of his pleasant pain there and his glad distress  
 In planting and plucking a proper jelloffer<sup>4</sup> flower;  
 But how it was, some were too reckeless,  
 Notwithstanding it is remediless;  
 What might she say? what might he do thereto?  
 Though Jack said nay, yet Mock there lost her shoe<sup>5</sup>;

How then like a man he won the barbican  
 With an assault of solace at the long last;  
 The colour deadly, swart, blo, and wan  
 Of Ixione, his limbs<sup>6</sup> dead and past,  
 The cheek and the neck but a shortè cast<sup>7</sup>;  
 In Fortune's favour ever to endure,  
 No man living, he saith, can be sure;

How dame Minerva first found the olive tree, •  
 And planted it where never before was none;  
 An hind enhurt, hit by casualty,  
 Recovered when the forester was gone;  
 The harts of the herd began for to groan,

<sup>1</sup>park-keeper.

<sup>2</sup>"And the Pope fled into Castle Angell" (Cavendish, *Life of Wolsey*).

<sup>3</sup>Recital.

<sup>4</sup>carnation.

<sup>5</sup>I think it means, "lost her good reputation." A knight who conquered in combat was said to win his shoes.

<sup>6</sup>Dyce has "her lambes." Mr. Hughes (op. cit.) suggests the above reading, which helps to restore meaning to the passage.

<sup>7</sup>This may refer to Ixion's cramped position on the wheel, i.e. a short space between his cheek and neck (?).

The hounds began to yearn<sup>1</sup> and to quest;  
With little business standeth much rest;

His Epitomes of the miller and his joly make<sup>2</sup>;  
How her blee<sup>3</sup> was bright as blossom on the spray,  
A wanton wench and well could bake a cake;  
The miller was loth to be out of the way!  
But yet for all that, be as be may,  
Whether he rode to Swaffham or to Some,<sup>4</sup>  
The miller durst not leave his wife at home!

With, Woefully Arrayed, and shamefully betrayed;  
Of his making devout meditations;  
*Vexilla regis* he deviséd to be displayed;  
With *Sacris solemniiis*, and other contemplations,  
That in them comprisé considerations;  
Thus passeth he the time both night and day,  
Sometime with sadness, sometime with play;

Though Gallen and Dioscorides,  
With Hippocrates and Maister Auycen,<sup>5</sup>  
By their physic doth many a man ease,  
And though Albumasar can thee inform and ken  
What constellations are good or bad for men,  
Yet when the rain raineth and the goose winketh,  
Little woteth the gosling what the goose thinketh!

He is not wise against the stream that striveth;  
Dun is in the mire —<sup>6</sup> dame, reach me my spur!  
Needs must he run that the devil driveth;  
When the steed is stollen, spar<sup>7</sup> the stable-door!  
A gentle hound should never play the cur;

<sup>1</sup>give tongue.

<sup>2</sup>mate.

<sup>3</sup>complexion.

<sup>4</sup>Soham.

<sup>5</sup>An Arabian physician of the tenth century.

<sup>6</sup>A Christmas game, in which Dun (a cart-horse) is supposed to be stuck in the mud.

<sup>7</sup>shut.

It is soon espiéd where the thorn pricketh,  
And well woteth that cat whose beard she licketh;

With Marione clarion, sol, lucern,<sup>1</sup>

• *Grand juir*, of this French proverb old,

How men were wont for to discern

By Candlemas Day what weather should hold,

But Marione clarion was caught with a cold,

And all overcast with cloudès unkind,

This goodly flower with stormès was untwind<sup>2</sup>;

This jillyflower gentle, this rose, this lily flower,

This primrose peerless, this proper violet,

This columbine clear and freshest of colour,

This delicate daisy, this strawberry prettily set,

With froward frostès, alas, was all to-fret<sup>3</sup>!

But who may have a more ungracious life

Than a childis bird and a knavis wife?

Think what ye will

Of this wanton bill;

By Mary Gipsy,

*Quod scripsi, scripsi:*

*Uxor tua, sicut vitis,*

*Habetis in custodiam,*

*Custodite sicut scitis,*

*Secundum Lucam, etc.*<sup>4</sup>

Of the Bonehams of Ashridge beside Berkhamstead,<sup>5</sup>

That goodly place to Skelton most kind,

<sup>1</sup>lamp. •

<sup>2</sup>destroyed.

<sup>3</sup>altogether consumed.

<sup>4</sup>What I have written, I have written [Vulgate, Joan. xix. 22]. Your wife, like a vine, you have in confinement, guard her as with statutes, according to Luke, etc. (Vulgate, Luc. i. 13, "Fear not . . . thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son").

<sup>5</sup>The college of the Bonhommes. It was founded expressly in honour of the blood of Jesus, which its founder, Edward, Earl of Cornwall (*temp.* Henry III), is said to have brought to England. (See Todd's *History of the College of Bonhommes*, 1823.)

Where the sang royal is, Christès blood so red,  
 Whereupon he metrified after his mind;  
 A pleasanter place than Ashridge is, hard were to find,  
 As Skelton rehearseth, with wordès few and plain,  
 In his distichon made on verses twain;

*Fraxinus in clivo frondetque viret sine rivo,  
 Non est sub divo similis sine flumine vivo<sup>1</sup>;*

The Nation of Fools<sup>2</sup> he left not behind;  
 Item, Apollo that whirled up his chair,  
 That made some to snur and snuf in the wind;  
 It made them to skip, to stamp, and to stare,  
 Which, if they be happy, have cause to beware  
 In rhyming and railing with him for to mell,  
 For dread that he learn them their A.B.C. to spell!

#### POETA SKELTON

With that I stood up, half suddenly afraid;  
 Suppleeing to Fame, I besought her grace,  
 An that it would please her, full tenderly I prayed,  
 Out of her bookès Apollo to rase.  
 Nay, sir, she said, what so in this place  
 Of our noble court is once spoken out  
 It must needs after run all the world about.

God wot, these words made me full sad;  
 And when that I saw it would no better be,

<sup>1</sup>The ash-tree on the hill [or ridge] blooms and flourishes without a brook,

There is not another like it under the sky without a living stream.

<sup>2</sup>Not the *Ship of Fools*, a few chapters of which were included by mistake among Skelton's works. Perhaps this refers to the lines in *Against a Comely Coistrown*, which begins:

"Of all nations under the heaven,  
 These frantic fools," etc.

But this is doubtful.

But that my petition would not be had,  
 What should I do but take it in gre?<sup>1</sup>  
 For, by Jupiter and his high majestie,  
 I did what I could to scrape out the scrolls,  
 Apollo to rase out of her ragman rolls!

Now hereof it irketh me longer to write;  
 To Occupation I will again resort,  
 Which read on still, as it came to her sight,  
 Rendering my devices I made in disport  
 Of the Maiden of Kent calléd Comfort,  
 Of lovers' testaments and of their wanton willis,  
 And how Iollas lovéd goodly Phillis;

Diodorus Siculus of my translation<sup>2</sup>  
 Out of fresh Latin into our English plain,<sup>3</sup>  
 Recounting commodities of many a strange nation;  
 Who readeth it once would read it again;  
 Six volumes engroséd together it doth contain.  
 But when of the laurel she made rehearsall,  
 All orators, poets, with other great and small,

A thousand thousand, I trow, to my dome,<sup>4</sup>  
 Triumphā, triumphā! they criéd all about!  
 Of trumpets and clarions the noise went to Rome;  
 The starry heaven, methought, shook with the shout;  
 The ground groanéd and trembléd, the noise was so stout!  
 The Queen of Fame commanded shut fast the boke,  
 And therewith suddenly out of my dream I woke.

My mind of the great din was somedeale amazéd,  
 I wipéd mine eyen for to make them clear;

<sup>1</sup>take it kindly.

<sup>2</sup>Still in MS. at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. An edition was, at one time, being prepared by the E.E.T.S.

<sup>3</sup>i.e. from the Latin of Poggio.

<sup>4</sup>thinking.

Then to the heaven spherical upward I gazéd,  
 Where I saw Janus, with his double chere,<sup>1</sup>  
 Making his almanac for the new year;  
 He turned his tirikis, his volvel ran fast:  
 Good luck this new year! the old year is past.

*Mens tibi sit consulta, petis? sic consule menti;  
 Aemula sit Jani, retro speculetur et ante.<sup>2</sup>*

*Skeltonis alloquitur librum suum.<sup>3</sup>*

*Ite, Britannorum lux O radiosa, Britannum  
 Carmina nostra pium vestrum celebrate Catullum!  
 Dicite, Skeltonis vester Adonis erat;  
 Dicite, Skeltonis vester Homerus erat,  
 Barbara cum Latio pariter jam currite versu;  
 Et licet est verbo pars maxima texta Britanno,  
 Non magis incompta nostra Thalia patet,  
 Est magis inculta nec mea Calliope.  
 Nec vos paeniteat rabiem tolerare caninam,  
 Nam Maro dissimiles non tulit ille minas,  
 Immunis nec enim Musa Nasonis erat.<sup>4</sup>*

#### LENVOY

Go, little quair,<sup>5</sup>  
 Demean you fair!

<sup>1</sup>face.

<sup>2</sup>Your mind must be consulted, you say? Well, consult your mind;

Let it emulate Janus, looking back and front.

<sup>3</sup>Skelton addresses his own book.

<sup>4</sup>Go, radiant light of the Britons, make known our songs, your worthy British Catullus. Say Skelton was your Adonis; say Skelton was your Homer; though foreign, you now run on a par with Latin verse. The greater part is woven of British words; nor is our Thalia too uncouth, nor my Calliope too unlearned. Nor are you sorry to bear with dog's madness; for even great Virgil bore the brunt of similar threats; and even Ovid's muse was not exempt.

<sup>5</sup>book.



Take no despair,  
Though I you wrate  
After this rate  
In English letter;  
So much the better  
Welcome shall ye  
To some men be;  
For Latin works  
Be good for clerks;  
Yet now and then  
Some Latin men  
May haply look  
Upon your book,  
And so proceed  
In you to read,  
That so indeed  
Your fame may spread  
In length and bread.  
But then I dread  
Ye shall have need  
You for to speed  
To harness<sup>1</sup> bright,  
By force of might,  
Against envy  
And obloquy;  
And wote ye why?  
Not for to fight  
Against despite,  
Nor to derain<sup>2</sup>  
Battle again<sup>3</sup>  
Scornful disdain,  
Nor for to chide,  
Nor for to hide  
You cowardly;  
But courteously  
That I have penn'd

<sup>1</sup>armour.<sup>2</sup>contest.<sup>3</sup>against.

For to defend,  
 Under the banner  
 Of all good manner,  
 Under protection  
 Of sad correction,  
 With toleration  
 And supportation  
 Of reformation,  
 If they can spy  
 Circumspectly  
 Any word defacéd  
 That might be raséd,  
 Else ye shall pray  
 Them that ye may  
 Continue still  
 With their good will.

*Ad serenissimam Majestatem Regiam, pariter cum Domino  
 Cardinali, Legato a latere honorificatissimo, etc.*<sup>1</sup>

## LAUTRE ENVOY

*Perge, liber, celebrem pronus regem venerare  
 Henricum octavum, resonans sua praemia laudis.  
 Cardineum dominum pariter venerando salutes,  
 Lagatum a latere, et fiat memor ipse precare  
 Prebendae, quam promisit mihi credere quondam,  
 Meque suum referas pignus sperare salutis –  
 Inter spemque metum.*<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>To the Most Serene Royal Majesty, equally with the Lord Cardinal, the most honourable legate *a latere*.

<sup>2</sup>Go, book, fall before the great King Henry VIII and worship him, re-echoing with his glories. Greet too, with equal reverence, the great Cardinal, legate *a latere*, and may he be mindful to sue for the prebend which he promised to entrust to me some day, and give me ground to hope for his protection – between hope and fear.

'Tween hope and dread  
My life I lead,  
But of my speed  
    Small sickness<sup>1</sup>;  
Howbeit I rede<sup>2</sup>  
Both word and deed  
Should be agreed  
    In nobleness.  
Or else, etc.

<sup>1</sup>security.

<sup>2</sup>consider.